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Simple Essentials

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Quiet Talks About Simple Essentials
and
The Present World Outlook

S. D. GORDON'S QUIET TALKS

Quiet Talks on Power
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QUIET TALKS

ABOUT

SIMPLE ESSENTIALS

And the Present World Outlook

By

S. D. GORDON

Author of "*Quiet Talks on Power*,"
"*Quiet Talks on Prayer*"



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PREFACE

TANGLED, tense, ragged,—these are the words that tell most aptly the world's story to-day; politically tangled, religiously tense, morally ragged.

The statesmen and financiers agree on the first, the tangle, especially those on the Thames and the Seine, the Rhine and the Mediterranean shores. Controversialists agree on the second, the tensity, especially, at the moment, those this side the salt water, with extremism, loose verbiage, and compromise befogging the air.

All agree pretty much on the third, the moral raggedness, the ravelling out of moral fibre, both fringe and cloth, and some of the rags decidedly filthy, with no special emphasis anywhere, and so a marked emphasis everywhere.

And all the while the dense crowds mob feverishly along the highway, caught by whatever glare is brightest at the moment, and whatever blare noisiest, regardless of the suction swirling in and down. Cheap leadership was never more common; real leadership never more rare, apparently.

The old-fashioned virtues of simplicity and modesty, honest courage and rugged truth,

chastity and conviction, dressed in their Quaker garb, are being shoved to the wall, or hustled off the curb.

The personal habit of a bit of quiet time daily over the Book, with the knee bent, is having the fight of its life. And the bit of morning or evening fireside reading of the Book and prayer, with gray heads and young bowed reverently side by side, is a memory, recalled with severe mental effort, by the few.

The simple clear warm telling of the Old Story of the Man Who Died, and lived again, and still lives to help a man be pure and true, this is just a bit scarce.

Always there are the fine exceptions, but these never stood out in sharper contrast to the common rule.

These chapters grew up out of a series of "Quiet-Talks" meetings, last summer, in a theatre on the Atlantic Coast, attended by people from the four corners of our land, and a few from foreign lands. They have appeared in the secular and religious press from the Gulf to Hudson Bay, and from Lower Canada to the Mexican Border.

They were made brief for crowded columns, crowded people, and crowded days. Directions and suggestions given in the thick of traffic are best short and to the point. They

are gathered up here in response to some requests, with a few omitted to avoid typed duplications, a few added because of recent events, and a few made a trifle fuller.

The errand of this little messenger of ink is *not* to straighten the world out. Some One else must do that, and will, a bit later, the only One who can.

The thing aimed at is to hold up, high and steady, a homely light, clear and bright, so those seeking the main highway can find it, and those in it stay steady and not get swung off at the forks by the thick traffic.

The most aggressively earnest man, personally, may yet live in a fool's paradise regarding world conditions. He may persuade himself that things are working out the way he wants them to go. Ardent hopes may befog his discernment of what is really taking place before his eyes.

The wise man seeks for a detached, accurate appraisal of world happenings and general conditions, even though it may sorely grieve his heart, and disappoint his hopes. He does not pick out the good merely, nor the bad, but both, and tries to strike the poised balance.

And if the working-out process be different from what he would wish, and so disappointing, still the outcome is the thing to be con-

cerned about. The threatening storm, though terrific, may be seen to be a clearing-up storm. Beyond the storm the light shines, "clear shining after rain," never so bright.

The need of the hour, racially, cosmically, is A MAN; a man with ideals high enough, power great enough, understanding keen enough, and love patient enough, to bring order out of confusion, purity in place of passion, conviction instead of compromise, God's way of things in place of man's tangle of things.

The need, personally, is for clear vision, a spirit of obedience, and a heart of love. There needs to be a clear vision, kept ever fresh, of The Man Who Died, and lived again, and still lives, and plans some day to finish up the racial end of his earth-task, as he has, and does, finish up the personal end.

With that vision there must go the spirit of glad intelligent obedience to that Man, and to his plan for one's life.

And with these there needs to be the heart of patient strong love in all one's human contacts, no matter how crowded the day and the way.

S. D. G.

New York City,

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**ABOUT ESSENTIALS
IN GENERAL**

Compass and Anchor
The Big Five

ABOUT ESSENTIALS IN GENERAL

Compass and Anchor.

A COMPASS and an anchor aren't handy things to have at sea. They're essentials. No ship's captain will ever say that it's a good thing to have a chart and a steering apparatus. You've got to have them.

The old world is surely "at sea" just now. The statesmen agree on that much, and the international financiers and educators and others. A good many of the statesmen are decidedly shaky on their chart and compass and steering apparatus. The magnetic needle that ought to point north wobbles. The North Star—has it shifted? or gotten lost? or, is the bother with men's eyes, possibly?

That World War certainly did things, and big things, too. And, the bother is, it is still doing things. The back wash is still on and on strong. The suction behind the big boat is terrific in its swirl and sweep and engulfing suction. Every one feels it, statesmen, publicists, economists, industry captains, teachers,

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preachers, and just we common folk earning roof and shoes, trying to get both ends together, somehow.

And the religious world is no exception to the rule. And, mark you keenly, this goes to the very root of things. For at heart every one has the religious instinct. There is a pull-up toward God inside every one. And if a man wobble here it affects his conduct. The moral fibre of life begins to unravel. And when that goes—what is left worth while? Or, what will be left at all in a little while? Ask Russia. Though you needn't go so far.

For conduct and creed are as Siamese twins. They can't live apart. You're intensely concerned with your fellow's belief about what is in your pocket as you push through the thick crowd. Creed controls conduct. What does he believe about the sanctity of your home?

A man's inside heart-beliefs touch the very vitals of all life, of every sort, everywhere. Every man has a creed, a belief. And it controls him. Whatever controls his actions—that's his creed. At heart it's really his religious belief. It's his response to that inside pull-up toward God.

And the pendulum swing is on in our re-

ligious thinking, decidedly on, sometimes violently, unwisely, untactfully on. At one extreme are old statements of belief, sometimes very rigidly put, yet with utmost sincerity. The i must be dotted just so, and the t crossed at a certain angle. Else one is an outcast.

Some are so absorbed, hugging a certain-shaped anchor, with its flukes just so, that they don't see the poor fellow gasping and drowning right there at the side of the boat.

At the other extreme the anchor is dropped completely. The compass is overboard. The steering apparatus rusts. The boat's adrift. And the occupants are laughing gleefully. The rocks ahead, the storm gathering black on yonder near horizon, these go unnoticed. Dot your "i's" and cross your "t's" as you please, but don't bother us about it, these say.

Yet, all sane men are agreed that there must be an anchorage at shore, and compass and steering arrangements at sea. In business, in school, in fraternal and social intercourse, in finance, in international undertakings, in traffic, even in pastimes—golf and tennis and ball—there are certain fixed things.

They are Simple Essentials, commonly recognized and accepted and respected. Or

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else one is ruled out of the game. These are the compass, the anchorage, the things we steer and steady by. They are essential. They are simple and few. They never vary.

Once these are understood and accepted, there is the widest range of personal liberty in belief and action. Agreement on essentials gives freedom. Liberty comes only in obedience to a recognized sense of right. Creed, belief, controls conduct.

I want, in these brief "Quiet Talks," to speak in a very simple, homely way about the really few essentials of our common Christian faith. By pretty common consent our Christian teaching leads all others in its ideals, and, more, in its power—a thing distinctive to itself.

Then one can go and think things through afresh for himself. I hope it may help us get our feet, and keep our feet, and stand steady, no matter how strenuously the crowds pull and push the other way.

A man in a small craft left his coloured servant at the steering wheel with strict directions to steer by a certain fixed star. The servant wakened his master in the middle of the night, saying, "Give me another star. I've sailed

past that one." Are some of us *sailing past* the one guiding star of the heavens!

You can't think crooked and live straight. Loose beliefs lead to loose morals. The two are inseparable. We are intensely concerned with our fellow man's morals. We must be. And he with ours. Morals make conduct. The State takes account of that. Every policeman silently tells of our intense concern about each other's morals and conduct.

There's a chain of five loose things that are tightly linked together. And conduct, moral fibre or the lack of it, hangs out persistently, insistently, like a clammy clinging chilling fog, at the lower end of the chain. Yes, it's the lower end.

I want to talk a little about these five things.

The Big Five.

Shelter of roof, warmth of fire, shoes for little feet and bigger, bread and bed,—these, and the like, take our strength. The circle of loved ones, where one's very life centers, this must be cared for, and well cared for.

Yet our thoughts go insistently toward the real things, the essentials. The spirit life is

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the real life, of course. I live in my body. I think through my mind. I, myself, am a spirit. We long to understand clearly, and so be at rest inside. We can't all be experts. The day's too short. And cross-currents run so strong. How shall the earnest man know?

Well, there are Five Simple Essentials for a strong pure true life. There is a Book of God. The outstanding thing in the morals of life is this, there is an outstanding Book. The outstanding Book of all books is this Book. Morals are the very life of life. This Book gives the true moral standard of life.

It states simply and clearly the moral principles that fit into every circumstance, and difficulty, and problem. Then there's more. It tells of the power that helps a man pull steadily toward that standard. And it tells of the Friend that meets your sore need, answers your perplexing questions, and solves your knotty problems. This old Book of God is utterly dependable.

Then, there is a Man. The outstanding thing about the Book is this: there is a Man. That Man lived the moral standard of life as no other has, actually lived it. He is our Brother-Man, our fellow, the one solitary God-

Man. In Him God came to us men, and comes to us.

He was as really God as though only God, and nothing else. He was as truly a man, a really human man, as though He was only a man, and nothing more. All there is of the human was and is in Him.

And all there is of God was in Him as He worked in that Nazareth carpenter-shop amid the odour of the pine shavings, and then taught, and healed, and loved, and fed, and mingled freely amongst men. The outstanding thing about this Book of God is this God-Man.

Then the Man—died. The biggest thing about His life is the way His life snuffed out. The knot on the end of that thread catches your eye at once, and holds it. There is a thread. What a thread! What a life!

Then the thread knots, a toughly knotted knot. That knot has caught the eye, yes, the heart of the race. It's been discussed and discussed. But the thing that stands out biggest is the fact of it. There is the knot. He did die, as no else has, or could, or can.

And there's the Fourth Thing that stands out, ugly and gaunt, dirty and odorous. But

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it's there. That's the fact of a break, man's break away from the Father-God. The common word is sin. The root of the thing is simply that, a break, a bad break, away from the mother-hearted Father's desire and request.

And, "and"—the striking thing to mark just now is this, that Man tied up in an unravelable knot these two things, His Dying and that Break. He, Himself, said the Break made the Death necessary. The more you think into it the less fully the explanations seem to explain. You feel there is always a something more. But the explanations are secondary. The fact is the thing. The Death is the outstanding fact.

And the Fifth Essential comes crowding quickly in. And it shows up at once what a princely brood and breed we men are of. Every man is a king in his right to choose. The man that knows about this Man must take sides. Choice of the Man who Died covers all moral choices. And choice makes character. It is an essential that a man make personal choice.

The outstanding thing in the morals of life is this: there is a Book. The outstanding thing

of that Book is this: there is a Man. The thing that stands out about the Man is this: He died.

And that Man said the outstanding thing about His death is this: it had to be. The thing called sin caused it. And the thing standing sheer out about the Man, and the Dying, and the Break of sin is this: every man that knows must choose. And every such man does choose.

And it is a striking fact, that looseness of thinking about the Book leads to looseness about the distinctive personality of the Man. Looseness there leads to loose ideas as to the distinctive meaning of His Death. That in turn breeds decidedly loose ideas about sin, the Break with God.

Then follow loose ideas about the need of choosing Him in whom centres all moral choice. And when moral choice loosens the moral fibre of character begins unravelling, straightaway, and not slowly. Look around you to-day.

A London astronomical expert superintending the erection of a huge telescope in Cairo, noted the noon gun fired daily at military headquarters, and found their timepiece was regu-

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lated by the watchmaker's chronometer in the city. Inquiring there he was astonished to find the chronometer regulated by the noon gun! Does that sort of dog-chasing-his-tail standard get into the serious things, sometimes?

I

THE BOOK

The Book of God

The Beginning of Man

*The Accurate Reading of the First Page of
Genesis*

I

THE BOOK

THE BOOK OF GOD

THERE is something tangible about a book. You handle it. You know it by the feel. It's in plain print, black on white, words you know the meaning of without stopping to think into them. If it's a thoughtful worthy book you read and muse. And you are changed, maybe imperceptibly, but really quite radically.

Now, there is one outstanding book. It stands quite by itself. In its claim for itself, its power among men, its history, the place commonly given it, its distinctive quality of inspiration, even in the enemies it has made, it stands quite alone.

It is the old Book of God. It is the one book to which by common consent that little word "the" belongs—the Book. It was inspired. It is inspired. That simply means the breath of God was in it, and is. His Spirit was in the men who wrote, guiding, controlling, inspiring, a supernatural touch through the human natural medium.

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It is a book like any other, paper, print, stitching, plain words. Its contents must be got through reading and thinking, like any other book. It is unlike every other book in this, there's a living Presence in it.

It reaches into your thoughts. It searches the innermost recesses of your spirit. It touches deftly, unmistakably, your motives and purposes. It lays bare to your eye the inner hidden things.

And there's a distinct touch of life to it. It quickens brain and thought and the part of you that chooses. There's a rugged strength now in your decision that breaks habit, and shapes new ones.

It's a mother of books. It contains the oldest authentic history. All the roots of modern jurisprudence run down into the Mosaic code. Political economy and moral philosophy find their basic principles here. Its laws of sanitation, of hygiene, of diet, and of business ethics, originating here, are accepted standards.

It is not a scientific book. Yet its statements never conflict with the latest findings of science. Its ideals of life, personal, national and racial, can be found nowhere else except

as inspired by its pages. Its literature, its love stories, its biographies, are unapproached. It contains the key to the intricate tangle in which the world finds itself to-day, the one key, the master key.

There's a fine modesty in its pages, and yet the most stupendous claims for itself. It claims to be a revelation from God Himself. It tells what reason cannot reason out. True reasoning and this revelation are fellows, working together to reach full knowledge. It reveals the past, otherwise unknown, and God's purposes, and His plans for the future, that otherwise could not be known.

It's a singularly honest book. It tells with frank bluntness the glaring moral failings of the men God used. He had to use some one. He got the best there was. He sternly rebuked them, and plainly points out their moral breaks.

This Book is the moral standard of life. And morals are the throbbing heart-beat of life. There must be a standard, or all life goes askew. A yard-stick for cloth, a foot-rule for timber, a sixteen-ounce bit of metal for sugar, truthfulness in speech, honesty in trade, a recognized propriety in cultured

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circles, a Gray's anatomy for physicians, a Blackstone for lawyers, and God's Book for strong winsome life and rest of heart.

The scholarship of the nations, and of the ages, has been devoted to the task of giving us this Book in our mother tongue, as to no other task. Its utter dependability from the scholarly standpoint is beyond question. The variations of translations in various versions have to do with incidentals, important incidentals, but never with vital things.

The modern English and American Revisions have the advantage of the most recently found manuscripts, the latest scholarship, and of the paragraphed printing. But one can rest content that the old common version is the most remarkable bit of translation ever done. In it we have the very Word of God, in plain English, a sufficient guide for daily life.

And it is not a big book. Familiarity with its pages by daily touch makes that clear. A daily habit, a settled method of thinking of it as one book, and reading it from opening page on, as a story, ignoring for the time being, chapter and verse, gives a fascination to its pages. And the poetical books and prophetic will fit into the story-part as drawers into

a well-made bureau, as will Paul's letters and the others into Dr. Luke's story of The Acts.

The practical key to this Book is simply this, reading it habitually, quietly, with mind alert, simply reading it, giving one's self up to it for a bit of time daily, and yielding the consent of one's life to its teachings and spirit. The famous artist kept the bright coloured stones always in sight to tone up his sense of colour. The sailor keeps his eye constantly on compass and chart.

That's the thing here. Reading it habitually tones up the moral sense, clears the vision, steadies the feet, poises the judgment, stiffens the will, gentles the spirit, comforts the heart, quiets the nerves, and sets the day's work to music.

But, in sharpest contrast with all other books, it makes you face a personal decision. There's no personal appeal in Napoleon or Cromwell. No decision presses in.

But here the Man of the Book looks into your face. He calls you to choose. And you do, this way or that. A Hand reaches out, and touches your conscience. There's a pull-up on your inner motives and your outer conduct. You feel all this, maybe distinctly,

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maybe almost unconsciously, but none the less surely. You are never again the man you were.

THE BEGINNING OF MAN

Man is of a princely brood and breed. He is not mere dust and dirt of earth. He's more. He's kin to God.

The story of how man got his start on the earth, and the old Book of God, these two, are tied up together tight. The Book has a story about man's start. It is told clearly, simply and positively. It is put in a leading place, at the very beginning. It dignifies man in a peculiar way.

There's another very different story being told to-day. It really lowers the dignity of man. It is being told so loudly and dogmatically that people are coming to think, unthinkingly, that it is the only story. Everybody worth while believes it, we are told.

Yet—yet, it is striking, that there are distinct groups of the ablest thinkers among scholars and scientists who don't accept it, but say some very strong things against it, with a quiet settled positiveness.

What is this strange ancient-medieval-modern story about man's start? In a word it is this, that man evolved by a series of steps, up from the very lowest forms of matter, up through an ascending scale, getting higher and higher till finally he got up to where he is now. Some put a supernatural creative touch of God at various stages. Some leave God clean out.

Even though weak links in the chain of evidence are frankly admitted, indeed sometimes the distinct absence of links, yet there is a peculiar insistence on the main teaching, quite ignoring the fact that the weak links, the absence of links, completely neutralizes the whole teaching.

It seems as though the process must have stopped, however. New men ought to be continually evolving up from the lower stages. It seems queer that they all come another way. And the other way fits into the Book's story. Rather striking that!

The two teachings are directly opposite. That's clear. The question involves not the present teaching of science on the matter merely, but the status of the Book, whose story is so radically different.

The Book's story is that man was created

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essentially as we know him to-day, by the direct act of God. On the lower levels of life, in this creation story, there are distinct forms or kinds. The striking thing to mark is that these never cross. Each kind reproduces after its own kind. It is never after another kind. This is specifically stated nine times. There is no crossing from one kind to another. There are unbridged chasms at certain points.

Then, at the climax, God by direct act formed man as a distinct creation. God breathed His own breath of life into man, making him still another kind, distinct from the other lower kind, God's own kind. That's the story.

Of course, the *principle* of evolution, or growth by development, is everywhere, but always within certain fixed limits. There's growth from early immature forms, up and up, until full maturity of that particular sort of life is reached. This is in all nature, and in all life. But there's never a crossing over from one form or kind to another.

The attempt at this is always punished by death, death by sterility. The power to reproduce life is lost, irretrievably lost. It's a well established fact of science that crossing

species results in sterility. It is the very thing that stops life, truly a dead stop.

The familiar illustration is the mule. The arbitrary crossing by man of the horse and the ass produces the mule, a peculiarly strong and peculiarly stubborn animal, and, be it noted, always sterile.

At its core the question is a scientific one. It's a matter of biology, the science of life. And the striking thing to mark carefully is that there is a distinct group of scientists, of highest scholarly rank, in each of the nations of Christendom, who say plainly in print that scientifically this teaching of evolution is childish, wholly unscientific. The biologists among them say it is a biological absurdity, a biological impossibility.

Some of these have pointed out how the simple creation story of Genesis fits in with the latest findings of science. But the other teaching persists, like a dense fog, settled down, obscuring and quite ignoring, simply ignoring, proven facts.

In the earlier days the teaching was put forward as a "hypothesis," that is, a supposition, nothing more. It's a strange perversity that

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now it is taught as an established fact, even with scientific facts against it.

On the other side, the things peculiarly distinctive in man tally with the Book's story. Man is not only superior to all lower creation, but radically different, not in degree, but in kind. There are four distinctive things in man—the mind, the understanding and reasoning powers; language, the power of expressing thoughts in a reasoned-out intelligent way; conscience, the moral sense; and moral choice, the power to discern moral differences and to decide.

There is absolutely nothing in lower life out of which these could have evolved. Out of nothing nothing comes. These four things are found nowhere else, except, ah! yes, except in—God!

Indeed, these are the distinctive God traits. Here is the link upwards. Man reveals unmistakably the direct creative touch of God upon him in these traits. His make-up tallies with the Book. And this is characteristic of the Book. It and man fit together.

As one habitually gives himself up to this Book's ideals for himself, as he answers to its upward tug, as he yields to the Holy Spirit's

gracious wooing in these pages, he finds himself coming, back and up, step by step, to the level of the true human ideal.

He attains, bit by bit, to the highest of his own possible self. The Book and one's self plainly belong together.

And so a man has in his own very self the fact that the Book is reliable. It is indeed the Book of God, dependable at every turn.

THE ACCURATE READING OF THE FIRST PAGE OF GENESIS

Imagination and Science.

Man loves the personal touch. It's in the blood. It's a bit of God in us. God loves the personal touch. The break of sin was a break in the personal touch between God and man.

God felt it. He felt it keenly. That's why Jesus came. Jesus came to fix up that break. He came for the personal touch, to get it, and to give it. He came to fix things up so there'll never be a break again.

That's why there is a book, *the Book*. The Book is God reaching through for the personal touch, and for its renewal where broken. The Book leads straight to the Man who came for the personal touch.

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It isn't surprising that there's an attack on the integrity of the Book. For it is the tangible base of the pyramid. Once that goes things begin to topple in our understanding of them.

The singular personality of the Man, the singular significance of His death, the radical meaning of the break of sin, the need of personal lining up this way or that, these things slip out of place. And when they go the breakdown of moral fibre follows with a rush. Of late, much of this attack has centered on the creation story in Genesis.

It's a striking thing that the world's best scholarship was put under tribute in the making of this Book, at the start. Egypt was the world's scholastic and cultural centre. Moses grew up in that atmosphere. He absorbed the world's ripest scholarship. He acquired the mental discipline of such study.

Then he had a post-graduate course in the University of the Desert, with the sheep, and the stars, and—God. *That straightened out his perspective.* All that man could teach, was *adjusted* to what God teaches.

Perspective figures big in real scholarship. The ripest scholarship means a true perspec-

tive. One needs constantly to guard against partial scholarship. Facts out of relation to other facts may lead one badly astray. Mere sincerity may fall into a deep ditch, and get mired, and worse.

We want to read together the first page of this Genesis story. The purpose of this old Hebrew-Egyptian scholar, in the story he tells, should be noted. With keenly trained scholastic sense he uses all available material. The Holy Spirit guided his judgment in selection.

His one purpose is to give to this little Hebrew messenger-nation a picture of the one personal God. It's a simple, graphic picture. God is intelligent; He thought the thing out. He is wise; He adapted it to the end in view.

He has power; He *could* do it. He is love; He *did* do it. This is the picture. Incidentally, the process in creation is given. And, of course, it would tally with the latest findings of true science.

Science is a matter of finding facts, and putting them together in an orderly way. Strictly speaking, imagination has no place in science. Science deals only and wholly with ascertained facts. In so far as imagination comes in, science goes out.

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The word scientist is used for two groups, quite different groups. There are the real scientists. They follow the true scientific principle and method. They deal only and wholly with ascertained facts.

There is a second group. They have rare skill, and much complacency, in blending some facts and much imagination. A bone is dug up out of the soil. It is judged to be a human bone, quite accurately. Knowledge of human anatomy constructs a complete skeleton from the bone.

Thus far the process is quite scientific. Then comes the skull, its cranial content. And here imagination comes in, imagination, be it noted, under control of a preconceived idea. The shape of the skull, its size in front of the ears, is made to tally with that preconceived theory.

Then the artist is called in to make a face suited to the cranial content agreed upon. Here is room for more imagination, the artist's. For imagination is the artist's chief tool. He makes a face with a receding brow, a heavy projected jaw, and a savage look. As a matter of actual fact, no such man has ever

been found or known. It is a bit of pure imagination.

And the museum is filled with the completed conception, and the text-books and all modern literature invaded. And the whole thing is painstakingly labelled as *science*. The bother from the true scientist's standpoint is the interplay of imagination with fact: some fact, much imagination.

The imagination is above criticism, except that it has got into the wrong pew. Romantic literature has suffered a distinct loss, and a certain type of modern journalism, too. The thing would be laughable if it were not tragic. For, at root, it is an attack on the one outstanding text-book of morals. It touches the secret springs of moral conduct.

Now, Moses' purpose in this creation story is *not* the *process* in creation. It is quite otherwise, simpler and deeper. Yet we would expect to find it tallying with the latest findings of true science. And the accurate reading reveals that it does tally, with a fascinating exactness.

The thing needed is to get people to reading the Book, without note or comment, simply actually reading it *as a habit*. The Book will

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take care of itself. It needs **no** defense. If only people will read it thoughtfully, habitually.

Reading the Book, and belittling the Book, are in exact inverse proportion. The less reading there is, to the common point of no reading, or disjointed reading, the more belittling. The more reading, sensible thoughtful connected reading, the less belittling to the utterly disappearing point.

Creation—Crisis—Reshaping.

What I want to bring you just now is the accurate reading of the first page of Genesis. This reading, let me say at once, is painstakingly based upon the ripest Hebrew scholarship. And, it is striking, that the maturest scholarship has been given to the study of this Book, as to no other, far and away.

The language used in telling the story has a touch of fascination in it. It is not in scientific verbiage. That would restrict it to the smallest number. It is simple every-day talk, the common talk of the common people. It is suited to the unschooled common crowd. That's the world's vast majority. And happily

the most learned can read and understand too. It is the one universal language.

Yet this colloquial language is never for a moment in conflict with the latest findings of real science. It is non-scientific, but never unscientific. There is the distinct touch of the Holy Spirit in the use of the language. If the thing were human only it would be called a touch of genius.

Turn now to that first page. It wouldn't be a bad idea to dust off your Bible, and keep it lying open as we talk together.

The story contains three items, the creation, a crisis or break, and the reshaping. The creation item is chapter one, verse one. The crisis is verse two, first and second clauses. The reshaping is verse two, last clause, to the close of verse thirty-one.

The story of creation is told in ten English words. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." There is no chronology, no calendar, no time notes. One can pack into that ten-worded sentence all the ages that geology plainly calls for.

The perfectly natural geological processes, such as we plainly read in rock and stratum, can be fitted into that sentence.

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The difference between the age of the earth, and the age of the race of men now on earth, stands sharply out. The earth likely is millions of years old. Man is a mere infant chronologically, by comparison.

There is a striking twofold division here, into "the heavens," *and* "the earth." The heavens take in the whole vast swing of suns and moons, planets and stars, swinging in space, and said to be ever swinging forward into new space.

Then, the story says "and the *earth*." One of the very smallest of all the globes, included in the other, is singled out for special mention. Why? Because that's where we live. That's where this story centres. Our chief interest is where we live, not so much that immense swing of worlds. Here is the personal touch. The telling is charming in its humanness. This is item one, the creation story.

Then comes the second item of the story, the crisis. "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep." The story now swings to conditions on this little planet where we find ourselves.

From this point the story is strictly restricted to what happened on the *earth*, and, further,

to what happened on the *surface* of the earth. Its internal condition is not touched upon. That is included in that first ten-worded sentence. From now on, it is the story of the *earth*, and of the earth's *surface*.

The revisions say "the earth was waste and void," and so on. The Hebrew scholars fall into two groups here. One group thinks of this sentence as describing a *process*, from chaos to cosmos, from a disorganized to an organized condition.

Another group says that it clearly describes a *crisis*. These insist that the accurate reading in English is this: "the earth *had become* a waste and a ruin and without inhabitant." The ablest mature Hebrew scholarship is included in this second group.

The "process" teaching would be that God created things in a chaotic, disorganized state. And, of course, He might have chosen to do that, though at first flush one hardly thinks of God's work as chaotic. It's a matter of what the Book says He actually did.

And, it is striking, that the Book itself simply says that He didn't create it in that way. In a purely incidental way, as though the thing were never questioned, Isaiah says,

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“thus saith the Lord that created the heavens, the God that formed the earth and made it, that established and created it *not a waste*, that formed it to be inhabited.”¹

The word translated “waste” here is the same word as so translated in the Genesis story. It becomes interesting to note that this word is never used except in the sense of things hurt, not as they were, nor as intended to be. The thing is referred to here incidentally. The moral issues of life are God’s essentials; all else, however important, still are incidentals. It’s a bit of the moral topsy-turvy of sin that God’s incidentals become man’s essentials; God’s essentials man’s incidentals, so largely.

There’s a striking passage in Jeremiah² which pictures the meaning of that phrase “waste and void.” Listen: “I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was *waste and void*; and the heavens, and they had *no light*. I beheld the mountains and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved likely to and fro.

“I beheld, and lo, there was no man (*i. e.*, no man left) and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and lo, the fruitful field

¹ Isaiah 45: 18.

² Jeremiah 4: 23-26.

was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down . . .” This is said by Hebrew scholars to be a graphic philological picture of the meaning of that phrase “waste and void” in the Genesis story.

Note further, that the description of what happened fits in with this reading, as, of course, it naturally would, *i. e.* “and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” The plain inference is that there was light before.

Now, it is noted, that there is darkness. The darkness stands in contrast to what had been. Whereas there had been light, now darkness shrouds the little globe as it swung in space.

Well then, was there a prehistoric race of man on the earth? That is interesting as a bit of speculation. But we are concerned now, not with speculation but with the simple facts given here. There is no direct hint on the matter elsewhere in the Book.

That seems significant. If God leaves the matter alone, in the tense moral issues absorbing attention, we, too, may let it rest for some future study, when the tremendous moral issues of earth are settled, or at least somewhat quieted down.

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But the scientific student notes in passing that here is a big shelf for prehistoric finds. It's big enough to hold a lot of fossil remains. This is the second item in the story, the crisis or break.

Then comes the third item, the reshaping of things on the earth. This is the rest of the story to the close of the chapter. This reshaping is said to have occupied six days.

The word "day," of course, has various rhetorical meanings. Here an alternate phrase, "there was evening and there was morning," is used six times to tell just what is meant. No simpler, clearer, more explicit language could be used to indicate a common day of twenty-four hours.

And it becomes of intense interest to note that it is quite consistent with the most vigorous intellectualism to understand that what actually is described as taking place *could* occur in six successive days of twenty-four hours each, a total of one hundred and forty-four successive hours.

For what follows is largely a reshaping. It is noteworthy as we read along that nothing

follows requiring more time, from the standpoint of science.

And further, it is *God* who is at work. A supernatural power is in action, *i. e.*, a power more than the natural power we are familiar with. God is chary of the supernatural. Nature is God's method in action. He loves nature's roadway. He made them. Yet, in emergencies, when need be, the supernatural swings into action.

The Return of Light.

The first day tells of light coming to the darkened earth. "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." The story does not tell about the origin of light. It is not now concerned with that. It is told wholly from the point of view of the earth. The earth was shrouded in darkness. Now light came to it, dispelling the darkness partially. The story connects back with the "darkness" that came in that catastrophe.

The word here for "darkness," like our English word, means obscurity, a thick shrouding that the light couldn't or didn't penetrate.

The story told here in simple common lan-

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guage is this: an impenetrable fog or dense vapour completely shrouded the planet. Somewhere in the heavens there was a point of light (included in that creation story). Now contact is made, by God's touch, with that point of light in the heavens.

The earth was revolving on its axis, as we know. The natural result was that the side turned toward that point of light was light, and the other side was dark.

There was the alternation of light and dark which we are told is called day and night. From the standpoint of the earth, the story could not be told in simpler, more adequate language, to the common man, of what actually took place. Here is the teaching of the globular form of the earth, and of its daily motion on its axis. The simplicity is fascinating.

It does not say that God "created" light. That's another story. That is not being talked about. It is already included in that opening creation sentence. This is the story of the darkened earth getting light.

Contact with light had been interrupted. Now it is set up again. The intervening space is clear so the light can again reach through to the earth. It is done by God's touch. This

is the first day, letting light in to the darkened earth.

The Atmosphere.

The second day tells about the atmosphere surrounding the earth, the thing that makes the earth habitable. The word used "firmament," *at first flush*, means a beaten out expanse. It was as though the heavens above formed a solid hemisphere or arch, with stars fitted in, and windows through which rain might come.

And this was the common conception of the early centuries. This statement has been used as an illustration of the unscientific notions of Moses. And the defective cosmogony of the Hebrews is pointed out.

But—a little digging, not much, into the language, shows how superficial that common criticism is. The actual statement made is found to fit with nice exactness into our later accurate knowledge of actual facts.

The root word under "firmament" means to beat out, to spread out, or push back by beating. Clearly it refers to the *process* followed in what took place.

The gaseous atmosphere was formed by the Creator's touch. Or, more accurately, it was

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reshaped out of elements already existing. Now this atmosphere pushed back and up the vast weight of watery vapour that had settled down around the earth.

The enormous pressure exerted by the atmosphere is a familiar commonplace in science. It has been estimated that fifty billion tons of watery vapour are held suspended above the earth. Now here the newly formed gaseous atmosphere beat back, or pushed back and up, from the earth's surface the enormous weight of watery vapour. This was the second day, the making of a habitable atmosphere for the earth.

Clearing the Earth's Surface.

The third day deals directly with the *earth's surface*. It is cleared. It had been covered with water. Now the waters are drained off together, leaving a twofold division, dry land and seas.

There is a strange direct touch of God's hand in the restraint upon the seas. Why do they stay where they are? Why do they not overflow the land again? It would be the natural thing according to the laws of nature.

It's a thing that can't be explained on scien-

tific grounds. Certain sequences and processes can be observed, and learned words used in description. The only explanation that explains takes into account the one thing that is so carefully ignored, or reluctantly referred to.

It is this: God's restraint upon the seas, for man's sake. The mere partial withdrawal of His hand would be disastrous. God's own words to Job give the one explanation: "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."¹

And now the *cleared part* is got ready for somebody's use. There is the beginning of vegetable life, grasses, herbs, and trees. Each sort has in itself the means of keeping going endlessly.

And explicit care is taken that the stock shall be kept pure. There is to be no cross-breeding, no hybrid mongrelism. Each kind propagates after its own kind. Stock purity is planned for insistently. This is the third day, clearing and stocking the earth's soil.

The Lighting-System.

The fourth day the permanent lighting-

¹ Job 38:9; read chapter throughout.

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system of the earth is fixed. The careful use of language catches one's eye. The first day speaks of light: the fourth day of lights. There's a world of meaning in that little "s."

The word underneath means light-holders or reservoirs, light-storage-plants, light-distributors. It does not say that light was "created." The word "made" is used. In the variety of usages belonging to this word is this one, "to show, to display, to hold out." Again, it will be noted that the thing being told is not about light, but about the earth, how it got its fixed lighting-system.

If it means that full contact was set up with the light that shone before that darkness came, the intervening space fully and permanently cleared up, so that the light would shine steadily on the earth, and the alternation of day and night be habitually fixed, *if* this is what is meant it could not be told better. Apparently this is just what took place.

There is a threefold purpose in this lighting arrangement, and it fits into the needs of the case. It is to be the fixed lighting-system for the earth. It will distinguish between day and night. And it will be a threefold marker for days, and seasons, and years.

The turning of the earth on its axis would give the alternation of day and night, so necessary for all life. The revolution around the sun would give the year, to make and keep reckonings by. And the ecliptic variation in the direct shining of the sun's rays would give the alternation of seasons, so essential in nature. A simpler, more effective system of lighting, better adapted to needs, could not be more simply described.

The fifth day tells partly of animal life on the earth. Two sorts of animals are created, water animals and air animals, fishes and birds. Again provision is made for self-propagation, and to a very marked degree.

And again strict purity of stock is emphasized by repetition. There is to be no cross-breeding, no mongrelism. Purity of stock is insisted upon, *and* is directly connected with the power of self-propagation. This is the fifth day, water life and air life.

Man's Companions and Man.

The sixth day tells of land animals, and it tells of man. The land animals are the beasts roaming free, the domestic animals for man's immediate service, and the creeping animals;

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with power of self-propagation. And insistence on purity of stock, each after its own kind, is emphasized by special repetition.

Then comes the *climax*, the creation of man. By position in the story, by the amount of space given to it, almost a third of the whole, by the fullness of description, man is the climax of the creation story.

His creation is planned out in detail beforehand. Then the plan is carefully carried out. That he's made in God's own image is particularized. That statement parallels the oft-recurring phrase "after its kind" used of other kinds. Here's a new kind, different from all other kinds on the earth. It is God's own kind. God makes man like Himself.

The power of self-propagation is conferred by a special word and with a special benediction. Man is made a prince. He is undermaster of creation. All these previous things were simply a getting ready for man.

The word "created" occurs here for the third time in the whole story. It is used first in that ten-worded story of creation. It is used in connection with living creatures on the fifth day. Now it is used twice in connection with man.

The word "made" is used three times, of the firmament, of the sun and moon (though the time of making is not specified when the word is used), and of the lower animal creation. The word "make" is used in advance of man, and changed to "create" when man actually comes.

The word under "create" means to make out of nothing. The words "made" and "formed" (used once) mean made out of existing material. Six times the mere word of God, "he said," has the needed power in it.

This is the story of the six days. It will be noted that there is nothing here in conflict with the findings of real science. There is no scientific difficulty in understanding such things being done in six common consecutive days, with God at work.

It is noteworthy that there is an exception made in speaking of the atmospheric envelope of the earth. Every other day what is done was declared "good" and "very good." A significant absence of this approval marks the second day. It seems to point to that strange foul spirit prince Satan, and his minions. He is called the prince of the powers of the air.¹

¹ Ephesians 2:2 and numerous parallels.

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God's Water-mark.

It will be seen at a glance that the accurate reading of this first page of Genesis is the best answer to the old-medieval-new hypothesis of the evolution of man, from the lowest forms up, across the lines of different species, to his present status. Of course, the *principle* of evolution, or development within distinct limits, is in all life.

Clearly that teaching is, at its root, an attack on the integrity of the Book, and on the supernatural. There is much talk to-day in church circles and university circles about *theistic* evolution. It is put in contrast with atheistic evolution. Atheistic, of course, leaves God utterly out; theistic supposes Him in somewhere.

And that seems good so far. But it seems better than it is. For while admitting the existence of God and His touch somewhere, yet it attacks the integrity of the account of creation, incidentally given in Moses' picture of God.

It insists on a theory exactly opposite to the Book, as well as opposite to the findings of true science. And it is a more subtle attack on God, because it appears to be loyal to Him,

while utterly opposed to the teachings of His Word.

It is striking to mark that the hypothesis of evolution as commonly taught is not a mere academic question, where one's personal opinion doesn't matter. It is a moral question. For, at root, it attacks the integrity of the Book, and of the supernatural. And one must line up on a moral question.

When the Book goes, the distinctive personality of the Man, the distinctive significance of his death, the damnable treason of sin, the need of personal choice, these go, *in our thinking*. And as a man thinketh in his heart so is he in the character of his life. And the ravelling out of moral fibre follows, and not slowly.

But, *but*, go back a moment. The picture of God, His hunger of heart for personal touch with us men, this is the big thing on that first page.

Hush your heart, and note keenly how that bad break in the second sentence was fixed. "The spirit of God *tremulous with love brooded* on the face of the waters." There is the personal touch. God gave Himself to fix up that break. All that follows is in, and comes out of, that word "*brooded*."

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Brooding is a mother word. You've seen a hen in the barnyard on a chill, spring morning brooding over her brood of little chicks. She gives of her love, yes, of her life. Something of her own self goes out to the little cuddling chicks.

You know how a mother of our human kind broods over the precious wee bit of humanity, made in her image, and in God's; broods tremulous with love when there is nothing needing to be done.

That's a picture of God. It's the second earliest picture here on this Genesis page. The first picture is of the intelligence and wisdom, the power and love, that made the world. Here He's giving His own self by direct touch to mend that bad break.

Do you remember how Jesus, weeping bitter tears over Jerusalem, used very homely talk: "*How often would I have gathered you as a hen her brood!*"

There is another simple bit of that eager giving of the personal touch by God in this old creation story. It says He breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life. He gave a bit of His own self originally that we might be in His own very image.

John-Three-sixteen is plainly written over Genesis One. For when God gave His breath to us He gave the pledge that if ever the need came He would do yet more. He would finish up the giving. He would give His life clear out. And the need did come, tragic in its intensity. And He gave himself clean out, His life-blood for us.

From old time, paper manufacturers have put their proprietary touch on their distinctive products in the water-mark. By the skilful pressure of wire on the still plastic paper pulp the mark is made to stand clearly out. The paper has to be held to the light to see the imprinted water-mark.

Hold up the paper of this first leaf of Genesis to the light. The best light is that which shone out at Calvary, with a distinct, reddish tinge to it.

And you plainly see a Man voluntarily climbing a hill, and being transfixed upon a rude cross. The heart that broods in Genesis breaks on Calvary.

The touch of the matchless love of that matchless God-Man reveals the unity of this old Book of God.

II

THE MAN

The God-Man
The Human God

II

THE MAN

THE GOD-MAN

THE blacksmith was right. Ignorant, blasphemous, he railed on the man trying to sell him a Bible. The man deftly left a copy behind as he slipped out. The blacksmith began reading. Caught, surprised, startled, he sprang up crying, "There's a man in the book! There's a man in the book!"

Yes, there *is* a Man in the Book. That's the outstanding thing. Look at Him. Born in obscure poverty, cradled among cattle, His home in an unsavoury village, among people intensely clannish, He had no touch with schools, never travelled far, had no book, except one, and wrote none, left no organization, and died a death of peculiar shame. Yet within three days after, He was seen alive, and within three centuries He changed the calendar of imperial Rome.

It is fascinating in these older leaves to get fleeting glimpses of an Unusual Man. He talks with childless Abraham under the blue,

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and used the twinkling stars to number Abraham's unborn heirs. He wrestled one dark night with crafty Jacob, and gives the strange soft touch which bends that rugged chieftain's will. He meets intrepid Joshua at Canaan's gateway, calmly gives orders, and is obeyed.

He talks with cautious Gideon and the nation's long captivity becomes overwhelming victory. Strong Samson's father is overawed to find the Man talking with him, strangely no mere man. The Jewish statesman administering the world empire of the Euphrates is dazed by a Man of Fire in a blinding blaze of light.

At first it is simply a man, in outer appearance, in tone of voice, in garb, in the interest shown. Then, quietly, unmistakably, comes indescribable overpowering evidence that He is not simply a man.

And there is something more that runs along with these fleeting glimpses. There is an Unusual Man Coming. These glimpses merely illustrate the meaning of that. That same childless exile of Ur is told that through his unborn son will come a Man who will bless the race.

Sightless old Israel, on the Nile, sees a Man coming to lead the race. The foremost racial

lawyer speaks of a Man coming to do for all what he does for the Hebrews. The royal poet sings sweetly of a Man coming to rule, and do it right, and be as a benediction to the earth, fragrant as the dew of the new morning.

Then—then, The Man is here. He is born in a way unknown before, and unrepeatd since. He grows up in the simple Nazareth home. Thirty out of thirty-three years, ten-elevenths of His life, is spent in a white-washed stone cottage and a carpenter shop.

Nazareth means a commonplace life, in its outer circumstance, lived truly for God. Look a moment; rising in the morning, the kindling, milking the cow likely, hanging the kettle over the fire maybe, down the street with a cheery "Good-morning" to his fellow-craftsmen.

Then the carpenter shop, amid the odour of the pine shavings, hammering nails, gouging with a chisel, pushing a saw, polishing off the leg of a table for a crusty customer. Back at night, stretching weary muscles, the evening meal, talking over with the mother of the home the small, big, home problems, rent-day maybe, making both ends meet.

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And then off sharing sleeping space on a pallet in a corner with a brother. And that not for a year, but thirty of them. The Father's plan for the God-Man's life down here meant just that, living, simply living a truly human life, commonplace in its outer round.

Then there was the smaller part, measured in years. Feeding men's hunger, healing the maimed and lamed and diseased, robbing the grave of its victims, comforting sore hearts, talking over personal problems in the doorway, teaching by the roadside.

Is it any wonder the Galilean hills rang with praise of this Man, faces brightened at the mention of Him, homes echoed glad songs, little children came a-running, strong men and women came and listened and went with a peace within.

Then the opposition. Of course. The enmities aroused, the selfish ambitions blocked, old prejudices rudely jolted, cherished plans threatened. And then the climax. Ten times the leaders tried to do Him to death, and are held off with an unseen power they can't understand and can't resist. Then He allowed them to take Him, and do their worst.

And He did it, He said, for us. There was

some terrible need that it be done, that dying. So He died. And when the tomb had quite done its work, He quietly let Himself up, up toward His true centre of gravity. No tombs for Him when that one had done its work.

Truly He was the God-Man, and is, as human as though only human and nothing more; as really God as though only God and nothing else.

Jesus was the Face of God looking into men's faces. He was the Voice of God talking into men's ears. He was God Himself in human shoes, hand-pegged, and in human clothes, home-spun, hand-stitched.

THE HUMAN GOD

Men hunger for the human touch in—God. It's in us humans to want to know by the feel.

We crave the human touch, from cradle to grave. No fingers hold so tight as baby fingers. Children cling to mother and father and each other. The hand-clasp, lip touching lip, the light caress, the tightening hold of the hand as life ebbs out—the hunger for the human touch is in our blood.

That's why Jesus came, for that human

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touch, to get it, and to give it. The hunger itself is a bit of God.

Man is like God when he is truly human. That word "human" has two meanings. The hurt meaning has become the common meaning, the weakness, the selfishness, the narrowness in man. Originally, truly, it means the distinctive traits in which man is different from the lower creation, and is like God.

God is like man, the true human, in the power to reason things out, the twin power of speech, the moral sense, and, *its* twin, moral choice, and, most, rarest in—love. That word "love" tells most what God is. Love is a human thing. We know it. That's God's most distinctive trait.

The difference between God and man is in the limitations found in man. God knows no limit in power or knowledge or love. It's a radical difference in degree, not kind. Though too great for words or mental grasp.

Now, Jesus was God showing us these two things. He made plain what the true, fine human is. And He made as plain what the real God is. Do you want to see the true human? Look at Jesus. All there is of the human is in Him.

Do you want to know the real God? Look at Jesus. When you are looking at Him you are seeing the Father. All there is of God, within the true human limitation, is in Him.

Jesus shared all our human experiences. He earned bread and bed by sweat and toil. He knew family ties, friendship's sweets, sorrow's pain, indignation over wrong. He loved deeply, sympathized tenderly, and wept real tears.

He was tempted as we are. Many a time His brow was knit and moist, and His hand clenched, as He felt temptation and fought it. And He overcame temptation precisely as every man can and may, by the use of his will, his choosing, and the use of his knees. Neither without the other.

Except—yes, there is an outstanding exception. One experience He never had. That which grows out of wrong choice. But—but, that's not a human experience. It's lower down. He was more truly human in this that He refused to make wrong choice.

Jesus is peculiarly the racial Man, our Fellow. All sorts are drawn to Him, little children, the aged, ruggedly strong men, fine-fibered woman, virile, eager youth, student,

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scholar, unlettered, both sexes, all social sorts—all alike gladly confess His pull upon their hearts.

And He alone was the Son of God in the same distinctive sense. The Father was as drawn to Jesus as we men are. There was the fullest understanding and oneness of purpose, appreciation and love, between Jesus and the Father as between Jesus and man.

Here is the Book's own story of how it happened that Jesus came. God and man used to live together in a garden. It was a wondrous garden, full of trees and birds, and all growing things good to see and to eat. They were fellows together, walking, working, together day by day.

They used to meet in the twilight for a friendly talk, sometimes without words, as only real friends can do.

One twilight God came to the usual trysting-place for the touch with His friend. But the man wasn't there. God was there. God didn't go away. God has never gone away.

But the man went away. Then he went further away. Then he lost the way back. Then he didn't want to come back. And away from God he got into bad shape. His will

grew strangely stubborn. He got strange ideas about God not loving him.

All this was very hard on God. He sent messengers after the man. They were all treated badly. Then God said, "What *shall* I do? For the sake of my own breaking heart I must do something."

And this is what He did. One day He hid away the God part of Him, and came in among us as one of ourselves. And we called His earth name Jesus. He was a real man. He lived our life.

Then one day He got down, in, under, the load of our stubbornness, our selfishness to get us rid of it. And the load was so heavy it broke His heart. And the blood came. And He used the blood to clean us up, and break our hearts, and bend our wills, and draw us back. And He is doing it.

A little girl in bed screamed out when the storm broke. The mother, coming quickly, said, "Didn't I tell you, dear, not to be afraid? God is watching; you won't get hurt." "Yes, mother," the child said in a shaky voice, "but when it thunders like that I want somebody with skin on."

May I, with utmost reverence, use the child's

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child talk? Jesus was God coming with skin on. He came that we might know God by the human feel.

III

THE BREAK OF SIN

*The Bad Break
Falling Up or Down?*

III

THE BREAK OF SIN

THE BAD BREAK

THERE'S a break everywhere you look, a bad break. It is in nature. The geologist finds it in the earth's crust, and the astronomer in the upper blue. The biologist finds it in animal life.

The chemist constantly guards against the death element in the gases. The orchardist fights it by spraying. The farmer must overcome it to get a crop, and the stock-breeder vigorous young. The weather expert never knows when and where a sudden wild storm may bring destruction and death.

That break is in human life, too. Here it's a moral break. The banker and merchant think of it as they engage clerks, and plan surety bonds against somebody's failure to keep faith. The thoughtful parent and the wise teacher guard against it for the young people. We are all increasingly on our guard in a crowd. Even the mother is conscious of

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a something serious to be reckoned with in the will of her growing babe.

There's a break lurking everywhere. The break in nature grows out of the break in man. For man is the underlord of creation. He affects it. The two intertwine.

Away back that break began with God. The possibility of a break was involved in God's plan. Man was made free. He was like God in being free to think and act as he chose. There was the chance of a break. He could choose right, or wrong. He chose. He made a bad choice. That was the beginning of the break.

Do you remember the old garden story? The garden was full of fruit trees. Man was to eat freely of all he chose. Then God said, "The real things are the heart things. Let us keep in touch, real heart touch. It depends on you, your choosing to have it so.

"So, we'll call this tree here the tree of choice. I ask you not to eat of it, simply because I want you to stay in touch with me by choosing to. You may eat of it, of course, if you choose to.

"But, please, I ask you not to. I want your love because you choose to love, to stay in

touch, and this tree is your opportunity." There was the chance for the break, in the man's power to choose as he pleased. And there the break came.

Mark keenly, that the break began with the man. It is what he did that made the break. There was no break on God's part, except the break in His heart as He saw the man break away. The old friendship was broken. It was broken by the man.

And we've all caught the break habit. It's contagious. It's easy to break. It's hard to break away from the break habit. Yet—yet, there is never an actual break with God except as each man makes it.

It's not a matter of that first man's break, even though he started the down-grade. It's each man's own break or not-break that matters. That, only that, but all of that. Every man stands on his own feet.

The old-fashioned word is sin. A new word sharpens the meaning. The break of sin is not merely a misfortune. It's not a thing to be cured by the surgeon's knife, nor the psychologist's formula. Else things could be fixed up by providing surgeons and psychologists enough.

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It isn't merely a personal twist this way or that, more or less accidental, or incidental. No, at the core, sin is in the choosing power. It's a preferring one's own way to God's. The root of that break is in the will.

There never has been any break on God's part toward man. That should be underscored black. His only break is with man's break. For the thing itself, that breaking choice, that was bad. That hurt man.

A hell of suffering was packed in that. For man's sake that must be fought. The snake in man's bosom must be scotched and slain lest it sting the man's life clean out.

God's feeling toward man has never changed, not by as much as half the batting of your eyelid. But He hates the break bitterly. That's why the Man came to let us know how God feels both about us, and about the break.

That's why the extreme thing of dying was done, to break our hearts with the love of it, and rid us of the results of the break, and to put a new power into us.

So the break is mended up through our new choice. And a new tree of choice will grow in our garden. And He and we will meet in

heart touch again under the Tree of Choice, which will become a tree of life, never-ending fruitful fragrant life.

What a prince man is that has such power of choice! What a princely power that choosing power is that can break the plan of God! And—and, can make us friends again with such a God.

What a love it is in that Man's heart, and the Father's, to go to such extremes to mend that break! What a break, a bad break, that was that the Man did such an extreme thing to fix up!

An old Western stage-driver cried out in his delirium, "I'm on the down-grade. And I can't reach the brakes." Things seemed at their worst to him.

That bad Break really puts things at their worst.

FALLING UP? OR DOWN?

When Newton's apple swung loose from the tree it didn't fall up, nor out, but down. It fell to the earth.

It grew up out of the earth through the tree. It was a bit of the earth. Now, when free it went straight back, back to its mother-earth.

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The earth pulled the apple. The apple yielded to the pull toward the centre of its gravity. We call that the law of gravitation.

But there are three laws of gravitation. Newton discovered one. There's the law of spirit gravitation. It pulls man toward his spirit centre of gravity. There is always a pull up. Man's centre of spirit gravity is up. That's a second law of gravity, spirit gravity. It pulls up.

There is still another, a counter law of spirit gravity. It pulls a man away from his true centre of gravity. It pulls him down toward another centre. It's the pull toward the thing that's wrong. Wrong has a gravity of its own. Its gravity is always down, like the physical law. That pull away is a pull down.

The gravity of wrong has its centre in the Evil One. He is the opposite centre of moral gravity, opposite to God. The pull-down is a distinct pull away from the God-centre-of-gravity. Man is between the two pulls, up and down. The weight of his choice decides which way the thing goes.

Every man feels the God-pull inside. It's a pull up. There is an inner voice. It calls up. Every one hears it. It's a quiet voice, but

distinct and insistent. It never quits, or very, very rarely. There is a hand beckoning up. There is a light shining on the next step up. There's a gravity pulling gently, strongly up. It makes the next step up easier, even when it's not easy.

And every man feels that other Evil-pull. It's a pull down. It's an outside pull. It becomes an inside pull. There is an insistent voice calling down, a hand beckoning down, a light luring down, a gravity pulling down. Sometimes coarse, sometimes cultured, it is always down. Every one feels the two pulls within, up and down. He hears two voices. He sees two beckoning hands. Two lights catch his eye. And he decides which wins. Neither can do a thing except through his consent. There's no appeal from his decision. His say-so goes.

That pull-up is very distinct. That inner voice insistently unceasingly says, "Do the right. Don't do the wrong. This is right; do it; do it now. Do what you ought to." And every one hears that voice.

That pull-down says, "Do the thing you want to. Don't bother about moral distinctions. Don't be so particular. It won't mat-

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ter. Do the easy thing. Do it now. Don't think into things. Now, do it now."

It's the natural thing to say "Yes" to the pull-up. We belong up. That's the first pull, the real human pull. As Newton's apple, detached, went to the earth, so man unhindered falls up, up to where he came from. He grew out of God. His life centres in God. He answers the pull-up toward his true centre of gravity—when unhindered.

But—but, the terrible bother is the hindrance. That pull-down has become a second nature in all of us. It gets terrific. There is a suction to it, sometimes like the ocean's undertow in a wild storm. It seems resistless. It's easy to yield. It's desperate hard not to yield.

Yet—yet, the man himself is stronger than the pull-down, even when he's weak. He's stronger in this that he can't be budged nor pulled down without his own consent. No man goes up nor down except as he chooses to.

That pull-down makes a break with the centre one pulls down from. It's a gradual break. It gets tenser. By and by the strings can't stand the tension. They snap off short. That's the last stage. The common word is

death. At its core death is a separation in spirit from God. We think most of the body part. That's bad. The other's far worse.

The pull-down gets to the bottom of the hill. The common word turns that i into an e. That makes a hateful, hated word. But the thing is worse than the word. It may be left out of one's thinking, but it refuses to be left out as a fact. Gravity puts it in. It's gravity down, at the last, lowest pull-down.

The Old Book gets the story straight. The Man of the Book came to break that pull-down. He came to start a new pull-up, and to start it strong enough to offset clean the down pull.

It was a stiff job. It took His life clean out. But He did it. He starts a new pull-up inside a man. It's a resistless pull-up, through a man's own choosing to have it so.

Victor Hugo describes a man caught inadvertently in the treacherous quicksands, at low tide, on the coast of Brittany in France. Despite his frantic efforts, the merciless pull-down persisted, silently, relentlessly.

Now the man is down to the knees, the loins, the vitals. Now only the head is seen, then two glaring blood-shot eyes, then a tuft of hair. Then **only** the smooth, pretty quick-

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sands. That's how gravitation works, Newton's, and the other, too.

But the other is worse and worst.

IV

THE MAN'S DEATH

*The Knot on the End
Earth's Roughest Hill*

IV

THE MAN'S DEATH

THE KNOT ON THE END

THE knot on the end of the sewing cotton holds the seam in place, and the garment together.

There is a Knot on the End of our Christian faith that holds all in place. It is tightly knotted. That knot is the tragic end of the outstanding Man of the race, with the tremendous finish the Third Morning After.

The race has one outstanding religion. That one religion produced the one Book. The book reveals the one Man. That Man's personality stands wholly alone in its sheer size. His life stands solitary in its purity and humanness.

That His life went out, and so tragically, has become the central point of history. The calendars of the nations revolve around His birth. The calendars of human hearts revolve about the hour when His great heart broke.

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Look at that Knot on the End. Thirty years were in Nazareth. Three and a half more were tireless in helping man. That last week spells graphically the Man's lonely homelessness.

Each night He walked out to Olivet and slept under the stars. Each morning He walked into the city where the world crowds were gathered thick, and where His enemies were supreme.

For two or three days His steps can't be traced. Was He off in the quiet, gathering strength for the coming day of days? Then there is the bold ride into the capital on the royal ass. The King comes to His own. But His own received Him not.

The common thousands sing their grateful hearts out as they lovingly strew the roadway with garments and living green. But the leaders with green, narrowing eyes, and tightened fists held the national reins tight and drove hard.

The Betrayal Night finds the little inner company gathered about the frugal board. Then the traitor's withdrawal into the dark night, and the last, long, quiet talk under the

full moon. And then the sore strain of spirit under the olives.

Now the arrest, the pretended trial before the two chief leaders, the courtyard with the soldiers' coarse cruel mockery, and the thorn crown, and poor Peter by the fire. Then the Jewish Senate's official action, and Pilate, and Herod.

Then Pilate again, conscience-pricked, cowed and cowardly, with the crowds jeering and the coldly passionate priests insisting. And the terrible scourging, the dramatic hand-washing, and at last the decision wrung out by bitter hate, given out by official cowardice.

One could never tell the story if he were not held in the hard grip of a great purpose. Both shoes and hat go off, and one stands with bated breath and hushed pained heart, and watches with staring eyes.

The Man is laid down upon the crossed logs, and the spikes driven into sensitive hands and feet. Then the cross is lifted and dropped roughly into the hole prepared, the Man's weight coming suddenly down on the nails. It is nine of the morning clock.

As the nails are being driven, the Man is speaking quietly, "Forgive them, the soldiers,

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they don't understand; the blame's farther back." And the soldiers greedily throw dice for the cast-off garments. The leaders dicker over the kingly inscription hung over the Man's head.

The passing crowds with morbid curiosity throng and jeer. Yonder in the group of pain-stricken friendly faces, John's arm is tenderly supporting the woman of the grief-stricken spirit.

In the thick of it all the one masterful Man is on the middle Cross. He forgets all else for the personal touch with the man hanging by His side. Again He turns and quietly speaks to His mother, and then to John. What thoughtfulness! What self-mastery!

And now it's high noon. The sun is at its flood. Then the sudden fearsome darkness. Noon suddenly becomes midnight. And a terror spreads in the very air, and seizes men's vitals. What is this? Who can this be? And for three long hours that strange darkness!

Then the distinct piercing cry heard, "Why did'st thou forsake me?" That's the hardest thing for the suffering Man, the loss of sweet consciousness of His Father's presence. But it's past now. Then the tense thirst. But

nothing will be drunk that dulls in the slightest, for even the briefest moment, His masterful consciousness.

Then the great shout of victory: "It is finished": the thing's done: the battle's fought; it's over now. Victory! Full victory! Then the quietly breathed prayer, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit."

And then the most striking thing of all, "He yielded up his spirit." He was not overcome by death. He yielded to death, masterful to the last breath.

And the Roman spear revealed how death came. The blood and water separated tells of a broken heart. The tense suffering of spirit, it was that that snapped the life cord when He yielded up His spirit. And out from that Cross of suffering rings out to all men the cry, "I gave my life for thee."

The Knot was tied on the End, and tied tight. He died. He died for us. He died of His own accord. It was His own act, the time, the manner, the fact.

It had a purpose. Its meaning is found in His own heart. It had to be done.

EARTH'S ROUGHEST HILL

Contrasts make things sharper to the eye. Black looks blacker on white, and the white whiter. A dirty, mongrel cur stands out uglier in a brood of well-kept thoroughbreds.

Contrasts never were sharper than in the one Man of the race. He was of the blood royal of earth, yet He lived in a whitewashed stone cottage. He was a lineal aristocrat of the aristocrats, yet He earned bread as a carpenter. He came from a throne; He came to a dirty, obscure Oriental village. He came for a world throne, but He lived among a people peculiarly provincial and clannish.

His hand had held a sceptre; it handled a hammer and saw. His brow had graced a crown; it was scarred by a crown of thorns. He came, He said, to reign over a race; He hung on a rude cross.

He was the purest of men by consent of those that hated Him; He suffered as the vilest of outcast sinners. He came to bring in a new, blessed order of things to this war-scarred, thorn-growing earth. But sin broke the plan. But the thing's not finished yet. The game

isn't played out. The innings will turn. Wait a bit.

Those contrasts didn't just happen. That Man wasn't foiled. The thing was planned. The purpose of the Man's heart shaped the plan. The passion of His heart drove it through, even though His heart broke in the drive. Passion and purpose drove the Man steadily up the roughest, steepest, tallest hill on earth.

The geography of Jesus' life is fascinating. He was the Son of the Earth as well as the Son of Man. Every phase of human experience He knew, and every sort of the earth's surface He touched. He belongs to us down here, doubly.

He was born in a little village of the plains. In infancy He crossed the desert, and slept by the pyramids of Egypt, the cradle of history. He lived thirty out of thirty-three years in a common, country village.

He was baptized in the muddy waters of the Jordan River. He was tempted in the Wilderness. He drew the crowds perilously thick by Galilee's pretty, blue waters. He was transfigured on towering snow-clad Hermon.

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He went through the sorest strain of spirit in a garden under gnarled olive trees.

He was hurt to death on Calvary's hill. His body found a three days' resting-place in a new-hewn tomb of the rock. He was Son of Man and Son of Earth. He touched both intimately at every point of contact.

But the highest hill He ever climbed, the steepest, the roughest, was Calvary. It was tallest. It lay on the top of another hill, Nazareth. Nazareth was the human life He lived. Nazareth was the underpinning of Calvary. It was the quality, the purity of the Nazareth life that gave the distinctive meaning to the Calvary death.

It was steepest. None other climbed it, nor could, nor can. And only He by giving His life clean out. It was roughest. Thorn-growing, sin-roughened, it took His very life out getting to its top. But He went.

Have you ever been on Calvary? It faces three ways.

It faces up—toward God. The condition of things on the earth is a scandalous blot on God's administration. Surely God can't be good. It can't be that He cares, to let things go as they do, suffering for the innocent,

wrongs unrighted, selfishness riding roughshod over men, evil unpunished. Where is God? Does He know? Does He care? Why aren't things straightened out?

That roughest hill answers. It gives God's estimate of the wrongs that scandalize earth. They deserve the treatment His Son received. Does He feel? He, Himself, suffered at Calvary when His Son suffered, to tell His estimate of sin, and to destroy sin's power, and to hold judgment, sin's self-judgment, in abeyance till man has had fullest opportunity. God's embarrassment was to show His intense hatred of sin, and yet His intense love of man. He did both in that Calvary event.

Calvary faces down—toward Satan, that splendid, foul spirit-prince. Sin is obeying Satan. It enslaves man. The Calvary Man took on Himself what was due us. We are set free. Satan is answered fully and defeated stingingly. His power is broken. Calvary makes slaves free men.

And that Hill faces out—toward man. It breaks our hearts with the love of it. For that Man didn't have to die, except the have-to of His love. Ten or eleven times they tried to

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do Him to death. And they easily could so far as sheer force was concerned.

Each time He held them off with a power they couldn't understand, and couldn't resist. Then He yielded. The dying was voluntary. It means just what meaning the Man put into it. It had to be done, He said. He did it out of love for us. And the love of the thing, once it gets home, breaks a man's heart.

Sainted Bishop Whipple of Minnesota sat by the sick bedside of a cultured, old judge in the southland, talking in his scholarly way. At last the judge politely said, "Pardon me; but you know I'm facing the real things. Won't you talk to me like you'd talk to my black boy Jim?"

And the Bishop said quietly, "You're a sinner, like me. Jesus died for our sins. Trust Him as a little child." And the judge said, "Thank you, Bishop, I can get hold of that. That gives me peace."

When one faces the real things of life, or beyond, it's touch with the Man of the Calvary Hill that gives peace.

V

PERSONAL CHOICE

Shoes and Character
Faith or Fear?

V

PERSONAL CHOICE

SHOES AND CHARACTER

SHOES divide men into three classes. Some men wear their fathers' shoes. They make no decisions of their own.

Some are shod by the crowd. They unthinkingly decide to follow the throng. The strong man is his own cobbler. He insists on making his own choices. He walks in his own shoes.

Every man makes his own choices. And his choices make his character, and reveal it. This is the image in which man is made, this power of choice. This is man's distinctive characteristic. Every man is an absolute sovereign in his power of choice.

This explains why there is such a tense moral battle on. It's a battle for man's choice. The powers of evil lay siege to every man's will to win his choice. The Man on the Throne is ever wooing man to choose *His* way.

If that Man be in, the Evil One is besieging to get in, if only by a hair. If the Evil One

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be in, that Man is warmly wooing to be allowed in, not by a hair, but all the way. And man decides.

Commonly, a decisive victory ends the conflict. That's history. When the daring Drake drove back the Spanish Armada that settled Philip's ambitions to dominate England and Europe. When Nelson downed the French ships at Trafalgar that settled Napoleon on the water. And when Wellington faced the Emperor himself at Waterloo, that settled him on land, for good and all.

But here is an exception. Calvary was a pitched battle in the unseen spirit world. The Third Morning After was the decisive victory. The Man of Calvary was the victor. The unseen spirit power was stingingly defeated. Yet the decisive victory has not ended the conflict.

That Man wasn't fighting His own fight. He was fighting our fight and our foe. He offers us His victory, if we'll take and use it. But each man must decide.

We can't win alone. Long years have proven that. Two things must be tied together, that Man's victory and—our choice. But these two, Jesus and a set will—these are invincible. And the decisive factor humanly is our choice.

This is the biggest story of the Old Book. Here is the first page. In a garden God says to His human companion: "Eat freely of all these trees. But here is one, the Tree of Choice. Please don't eat of it. I ask you not to, so that you may have the opportunity of showing your love by choosing what I prefer.

"But you choose. You may eat of it if you choose. You're free. Do you as you will. But, please, for love of me, use your power to keep in sweet touch. But you're free." That's the first page.

Now, the last page. A free translation makes the thought clearer. Listen: "He that is set in his choice on doing the thing that isn't right, still let him be utterly free to follow the bent of his choice, even though it be against the way I want him to go."

Then the same thing regarding the gutter stage of doing wrong. And then the same thing regarding choosing right. That's the last page.

Now, turn the leaves of the Book, slowly, thoughtfully. And, on every page, practically, is this: Choose; choose right; don't choose wrong; choose now. But—choose. Choose as you choose. Either the word, or illustrations

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of good choice or bad—that really is the Book.

There's only one knob on the door of a man's heart. And that's on the inside. The Evil One can't come in till the man inside twists the knob and throws open the door. And God won't come in until the door opens freely to Him.

Choice makes the man. Right choice strengthens the man. It lets his friendly God in. It defeats the Evil One.

Wrong choice weakens the man. It shuts God out. It lets the Evil One in. It stiffens up the joints of the choosing power. It's tougher work choosing right, easier choosing wrong.

And it's striking that wobbling indecision practically results as wrong decision does. The tempter is strengthened in his approach. God is still out. The door is not open to Him. The will weakens. A wobbling will is a weakening will. Not choosing is choosing not to.

It is striking that, as a bit of mere psychology, choice of Christ includes all moral choices. By common consent He stands for the purest and strongest and humanest.

Choice of Him as a Saviour opens the door

for a new power to come into one's life. That power re-knits all the moral fibre of character. No conflicting choice can be made as long as one remains true to that one choice.

And life becomes a succession of choosings. Choice stares in at every window-pane. It knocks at every door. It rings the bell unceasingly. Its wireless cries come on the wings of every wind. The darkness intensifies the call, and the light brings it sharper and closer home.

And peace of heart, without which there is no strength, comes only in right choice made and unwobblingly persisted in.

Holman Hunt was right. A friend looking at his new painting, since so famous, of Christ knocking at the vine-clad door, said, "There's a mistake. You've put no knob on the door."

And the painter quietly said, "There is only one knob to the door of a man's heart, and that's on the inside."

Every man makes his character by the use of that knob. Every man must walk in his own shoes. And every man does, even when he uses another man's.

FAITH OR FEAR?

Every one is controlled by faith or by fear. And these two are sworn foes. They can't get along together.

When faith comes in fear takes to its quickest heels. When fear comes in faith has already gone out. The man is the doorkeeper. Neither gets in till he throws open the door.

Fear cramps the nerves, dries up the juices, sets the imagination wild, the heart a-racing, and the will to wobbling.

I'm talking of course about the fear that's afraid. There are three kinds of fear. There's the fear of reverence. It grows out of love. It is good. It's a tonic for nerves and spirit.

Then there is the fear of caution. It grows out of the presence of danger, and of wrong. These must be guarded against. And this, of course, is only good. Its absence is bad, and exposes one to danger, bodily or worse. Its presence means a wholesome discipline that restrains and steadies.

And then there is the fear that's afraid. It's afraid of something or some one. It is

slavish. It is bad, bad clear through, only and always bad. This is the sort that is most commonly thought of when the word is used. This is the sworn foe of faith.

There are two kinds of faith. The word is commonly used for a buoyant optimism. There's a rare bubbling-over confidence that's sure of itself and of the outcome.

It goes easily and naturally with youthful strength, that has not yet had any breaks. Sometimes it is planned for in an artificial way, through stimulants, by those who have had breaks. Then there is a worse break sure to come, some day.

Sometimes such faith is the outgrowth of hard study, and careful planning, and unflinching self-discipline. And then the results are sure to come. The confidence has its roots in deep and strong.

This sort of faith is recognized as a great asset, especially in commercial circles. It rides almost roughshod over difficulties. The man that never knows when he is whipped never is whipped. He's unwhippable.

And at its roots it is always faith in some one. It may be in one's self, a good self-confidence, or in others. Back of the bank is the

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man or group in control, back of the scheme being pushed is the brainy experienced thinker, and the backing capitalist.

This faith is a mental faith. It is quite distinct from what is called properly Christian Faith, though it may grow out of this under certain circumstances.

Sharper thinking leads to stronger action. It helps much to recognize that the thing called Christian faith is distinctively, at first flush, faith in a Person. It always begins there. Thinking about that certain Person grows in you the thing called faith. You don't think about the faith but about this Person. And your thought and attitude toward Him—that is the thing called faith.

That Person is the one in whom the whole Christian scheme of thinking and acting centres. He's the Man about whose birth the calendars of the world revolve to-day.

He's our fellow man, the solitary God-Man, who died in a distinctive way, and lived again, and still lives. He is the throbbing heart of our common, Christian faith.

And there's one thing more here: Christian faith means believing this Man for some particular thing. That's of the very essence.

You believe Him for settling the old sin score, for personal power against the thing that's wrong, for your bent-knee request. You accept at face value what He says in the Old Book.

And the striking thing to mark keenly is this, that the faith that is a mental trait or characteristic grows, and grows strongest, out of that faith in this Person.

You yield your life and your plans to His guidance. You go as you understand He would have you. And there is now the strongest kind of a bubbling-over buoyancy in the outcome. For He is back of you and your plan. And He is unfailing.

He—this Man—becomes the centre. Faith isn't thinking about your faith, how much there is, or how strong. It's thinking about Him. Your thought doesn't turn in; it turns out and up, to Him.

Look at that Man, Jesus. There He is sitting up there in the place of masterful control. He can do; He has the power to. He will do; He has the love to. He will do for you; you two are in touch of heart. He will do at the right time; He has the wisdom to.

"Oh," some one says, "that's sentiment."

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Yes, you're quite right. It is sentiment; but not sentimentality. It is sentiment that holds the vast British empire together. It was sentiment that sent thousands of our best sons to France and that holds our homes, our commercial fabric, and our very nation together. Sentiment, a strong high dominating conviction, is the very life blood of life itself.

A small boy asked his mother, "What does it mean to believe on the Lord Jesus?" Recognizing that her little son was beginning to think for himself, the mother said quietly, "It means thinking about Him, thanking Him for dying for you. It means loving Him, and telling Him you will try to please Him."

The boy went off without replying. By and by things were unusually quiet in the boy's corner. And the mother called, "What are you doing, Charles?" As she spoke she came in sight of the boy sitting among his playthings, head bowed in thought, as he quietly called out, "I'm believing on the Lord Jesus."

Thinking of that Person begets faith in Him. Faith grows love. Love turns fear out-of-doors.

VI

COMPROMISE—GOOD AND BAD

Culture or Christ?

In Union there is—Disloyalty, Sometimes

VI

COMPROMISE—GOOD AND BAD CULTURE OR CHRIST?

HAS Christianity become heathen? Ridiculous! Christianity stands for the best culture and achievement of the race. And "heathen" stands for crude savagery, ignorant barbarism.

Yes. True. Yet—if you think into the thing there's enough there to make one straighten up, and knit his brows and stare out.

The most outstanding distinction of history is that between heathenism and Christianity. When the two first came into contact and conflict the contrast couldn't have been sharper.

Heathenism did stand for the crude and savage. And it stood also for the world's best culture. It stood distinctively for all that was not Christian. That was the common contrast between the two.

Greece stood for the best culture man has achieved. In art and philosophy, in knowledge and intellectual vigour, and in personal beauty,

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Greece led the race. Its standard of beauty and art has never been surpassed, and rarely equalled. The world still copies Greece.

And when Greek culture was at its highest, the moral fibre of the Greek people was at its lowest. It was because of moral rottenness that splendid Greece went to pieces. And Rome copied faithfully Greek art, *and* Greek moral breakdown, too.

Their religion was a religion of culture, a philosophy, nothing more. Vague, uncertain, with no note of positiveness, its distinctive trait was lack of personal moral ideals, and, yet more, lack of power to make moral character.

In sharpest contrast with this the new thing that came on the world scene, Christianity, was distinctively a religion of positiveness and of power. It claimed to be a revealed religion, something direct from God.

Its most distinctive claim was that it was supernatural. That stood out bold and big. The Book, the Man, the Man's exceptional experience after dying, the Something put into a man who was a moral wreck, and which made him over new morally—these were the outstanding things that marked the new faith.

The supernatural power that changes character was certainly there. It was as certainly lacking in the cultural systems of heathenism.

We look askance at that word supernatural. It's rather considered the thing to do. Its meaning should be made clear. It does not mean something contrary to nature, but something higher up than the natural order we are familiar with. It means a power, more than the power that's common, working through natural channels.

God loves the natural. Nature is merely God's method in action. He is chary of the supernatural. His use of the supernatural is always as an emergency measure. It is brought into play by some emergency caused by evil. Evil is plainly here. So is God. So is the supernatural, to offset evil, when need be.

Christianity is not merely a code of ethics, nor a system of culture, a humanitarianism, nor a bettering of the world. It is all of these. It outclasses all others in these things. But these are incidentals, mere by-products. They are the glow of the fire, not the fire itself.

Christianity is distinctively the one only religion of power, supernatural power. It makes the lustful man pure in heart, the thief honest,

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the trifler earnest, the victim of passion self-masterful, the bodily diseased whole. The storm-swept knows sweet peace of heart.

And when Christianity becomes a mere code of ethics, a humanitarianism, and so on, and only these, nothing more, its distinctive trait has gone. It is down on a level with the splendid cultured heathenism of Greece and of Rome.

Culture means developing something already possessed. It can be carried to an almost infinite degree. It calls into play the highest and best, and delights the appreciative. It never changes the sort, only the quality. Culture never gets a Baldwin apple out of a Burbank potato. Larger, mealier, better-flavoured, it remains a potato.

You can't get a saint out of a rascal by any sort of culture, carried to whatever degree. Skilled, polished, taught, the rascal only becomes a greater menace. The rascal inside will break through some day.

Christ put something new inside, a power, a life, with a direct God-touch in it. There is now a supernatural power working through natural channels. Habit's long-time grip is broken. Then there is play for the best cul-

ture of that new life. This is the distinctive touchstone of Christianity.

The test of any teaching, and the test of any civilization, is moral personal character. The world's civilization is in the sorest test to-day. The moral breakdown everywhere is a heart-breaking commonplace.

Is it possible that Christianity is losing its one distinctive trait? If the salt, that has been blessedly salting all life, and keeping it from going clean bad, these centuries, if the salt loses its saltiness! Saltless salt! That's a desperate case. The distinctive thing gone!

An officer of a Japanese liner on the Pacific, pacing the deck one day, listening to an American companion talking about the Christian faith, with pathetic intensity broke into his companion's talk with the abrupt question, "But is there power to make a man live it?"

An Imperial University man, with the keenness characteristic of the Japanese, he touched the one critical spot. Happily he learned about the Man who died, and lived again, and lives, and gives power to live it. His face showed something new inside.

And for the rest of the voyage he kept bringing men to his friend's stateroom to learn

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about the power, yes, the Man, that can help a man actually live the thing.

IN UNION THERE IS—DISLOYALTY, SOMETIMES

Standing may be making real progress. Moving forward is sometimes moving morally backwards. It's better to stand than move the wrong way. Keep moving, but keep your eyes open while you move.

The get-together spirit is one of the commonest characteristics of our time. In union there is incalculable strength. The Roman Empire, the Roman Catholic Church, are historical instances of the power of organization under unified, vigorous control.

Our time is witnessing that spirit of organization to an unprecedented degree, especially in the commercial world. And it has come into the Church in a marked way, and has done great good.

Compromise is the very genius of organization. That word is used in the good sense. It means the give-and-take-principle, in active force, until common action becomes possible.

Yet—it's to be keenly marked, that there

are exceptions. When compromise goes past mere method and habit of action and involves moral principles, it is not good. When it means giving up, or cutting down, essentials, it is distinctly bad.

There are some get-togethers that are at once recognized as bad. If a man has loose ideas of honesty you refuse fellowship with him. That's mere common prudence. You have no idea of a union that permits him access to your bank account. That may bring your dollars down to his moral level.

A young man may be personally cultured, with charm of manners and conversation. But if you know him to be loose in his ideas of chastity you wouldn't think of his fellowship even for an hour with your daughter. Such a social get-together might involve a blighted life for her, and a broken heart for you.

And so when a get-together is proposed one examines it rather critically, balancing advantages and possible perils.

There have come to be two broad groups in the Church-world, the conservatives and the liberals. These are both fine words. Really they are twin brothers born of a common mother.

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True conservatism simply means a recognizing of certain things that are of the very essence. They are as unchangeable as honesty and truth and chastity. There is of course a conservatism that lacks the brotherly spirit and insists upon non-essentials. And that is not good.

True liberalism means a constant openness to, and an eager seeking for, every ray of new light, and every new bit of knowledge. It adjusts to these, but is utterly unchangeable on the real essentials.

There is a liberalism, falsely so-called, that ignores essentials. Both true conservatism and true liberalism insist on an anchorage. That, once clearly fixed, there is fullest freedom and range of thought and action.

What are the essentials? In morals they are truth, honesty, chastity. There can be no union or fellowship where loose views of these are held.

What are the essentials in our Christian faith? History gives the answer. They are the things in which, in the early Christian centuries, Christianity stood in sharpest contrast with the whole outer religious world.

A supernatural Person, standing solitary in

His human beginning, in that tremendous after-death event, and the power marked in His action—that was the throbbing heart centre.

That Man's death, standing utterly by itself in its voluntary character, and in its distinctive significance as caused by sin, and as settling man's sin score—that stood out as sharp and clear.

The damnable badness of sin as treason against the loving God, a sheer bold setting of the human will against God,—the Man Himself coupled these two, the death and sin.

And the absolute necessity of personal choice of this outstanding Man as a Saviour, to settle the sin score, and make for present character, and fix future destiny,—this stood as sharply out.

And with these stood the supernatural Book in its two parts, telling the whole story, and making the greatest plea for free personal choice of that Saviour-Man. It was reckoned, not merely as a record of the past, but a living thing, in which there was the living divine Spirit speaking to man's heart and conscience.

These five marked the historic distinction between the Christian faith and its religious

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opposite. These are of the essence of our Christian faith. There can be no compromise on these any more than on chastity and truth and honesty.

And it is striking to note that, when all is sifted down, these five essentials mark the boundary line between those two dominant groups in the Church.

Recently a leading voice in the Church has sent out a ringing call for a Church big and broad enough for both groups together, in most intimate touch.

Yet clearly such a get-together would be a compromise on the simple essentials. It would be rank disloyalty to the Man who voluntarily poured out His life-blood for us. It would be breaking faith with the distinctive historic past of the Church.

And, be it keenly marked, any such get-together would go to the lower of the two levels. Any moral union takes on the tone and colouring of the lower level group. And, eventually, the whole united group goes to the lower level.

Let there be the utmost spirit of brotherliness in contact, in helping the man that's hungry and that's down. Let the fine spirit of love permeate as the fragrance of a wild rose

in June. Let there be the utmost openness to every new bit of knowledge and of light, and an eager seeking for these, and readjustment to them.

But let there be not the slightest shadow caused by turning from the simple few essentials which are the very life, the breath and blood of our Christian faith.

VII

FOUR ANGLES OF WORLD VISION

The New World-Order

The Present World Outlook

*The Earth, the Spirit Battlefield of the Uni-
verse*

Earthquakes: Their Significance

VII

FOUR ANGLES OF WORLD VISION

THE NEW WORLD-ORDER

WHAT will be the outcome of the present order of things on the earth?

There are three common answers.

Some say Christ will return, and through His personal return there will be a new order of things.

Some say the world will grow steadily better through the present teaching of the Gospel until a blessed new order of things dominates. And then Christ will return for certain readjustments.

The commonest belief is that Christ will not return in person. He is said to be coming constantly in finer ideals, a truer humanitarianism, more spiritual conceptions, and so on.

The answer of the Book seems to be this: Some day the common crowd will be startled to find the sun's light turning into a shadow. It will be because of the shining of a brighter light athwart the sunlight.

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There will be a break in the blue overhead, and Jesus will be seen coming back again toward the earth. That brighter light will be the light of His face and person.

When He does come (no one knows when) four events take place. There's a Church event, a Jew event, a world event, and a kingdom event.

The Church event: that word is used for all in every clime and time who have touch of heart with God. That break in the blue overhead will be followed by a break in the green-brown underfoot.

Our loved ones who have been laid away, having warm touch of heart of God, will rise again. Their spirits, now consciously in the presence of Jesus, will reënter their bodies, and they will break up the green-brown sod as they rise out of their graves.

Then we who are living in that day, and who have that same warm touch of heart, will be conscious of some change making our bodies answer to a new gravity upwards. We will wait courteously that these who have risen may precede us, then we shall be joined with them, caught up into the presence of our Lord Jesus. This, very briefly, is the Church event.

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The Jew event: the Jews living on the earth at the time will see Jesus coming through the upper blue. Utterly astonished and dumb-founded, they will recognize and accept Him as their Messiah, through the Holy Spirit touch upon them. Very briefly, and partially, this is the Jew event.

The world event: all the rest remain on the earth after the Church group is taken away. There follows a partial visitation of judgment on the world system of evil, terrific but brief. The Evil One, with all his demon associates, is put out of action. The effect of that is incalculable. There is a new openness of mind toward good and God. Briefly, partially, this is the world event.

The kingdom event: there begins on the earth a new order of things. The common laws of life, and in nature, will remain in operation as now. But there will be certain moral changes, blessedly revolutionary, through the Holy Spirit's presence in unusual power.

God's plan for things will have a good try-out. It will be a time of world-wide evangelization, with the changed Jews like a nation of Pauls in spirit, and some of the Church group, with their changed bodies, helping.

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But when will all this be? No one knows. It is impossible to know. But the Book plainly gives a simple clue. Three words tell the story simply and adequately—crisis, Christ's Coming, Kingdom.

All Christian folks pray "Thy kingdom come." Some believe it comes through a gradual process, and some through a sharp crisis. The Book lays marked stress on the crisis preceding the Kingdom.

Five items mark that crisis-time. The Jew is re-nationalized again in Palestine, maybe a scraggly minority, whipped back all of a sudden by sorest persecution. There will be a coalition of nations (not all nations) north of the Mediterranean.

There will be a series of armed conflicts north and south at the Mediterranean, between this coalition and another great power or group.

There will be a great king at the head of the coalition—a bad king. John speaks of him as Antichrist, *i. e.*, the Christ-hater. Through his leadership the crisis comes, including war, religious persecution, and all attendant horrors. The centre of action will be Palestine and

Jerusalem, while all the world will be made aware of what is taking place.

But the Jew is the index-finger—God's index-finger. His racial preservation is the puzzle of the historian and philosopher. When the Jew actually re-nationalizes, and makes a treaty with that coalition king of kings, that's the index-finger pointing.

Then follows a brief time of armed peace, then suddenly the crisis comes, then the abrupt approach of Christ, and His own caught away; then a very short visitation of judgment, culminating in a terrific siege of Jerusalem. And that abruptly ends with the open visible appearance of Christ, in overwhelming power, on Olivet, with some of His followers. A bit of readjustment and then the blessed New Order of Things.

The truth of the personal Second Coming of Christ is a very important, fascinating non-essential. It is non-essential to salvation, to saintliness, to service. But, rightly understood, it is the master-key to the Book of God, *and* to the present world-tangle.

The true Christian attitude is to go one's daily round faithfully, uncompromisingly true in life to the Man who died, in warm practical

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touch with one's neighbours, and with the inner heart ever keyed to the Spirit's voice.

THE PRESENT WORLD OUTLOOK

Jesus was a world man in size and reach. He did not come to the Jew merely. That was only the door. He came through the Jew door. But He came to the world.

He did not come to Palestine simply. That was only the door-sill. He stepped over the Palestinian door-sill. But He came to the world. He died for the world, He said. He talked constantly about the world. At the last He sent His followers out on a mission to the world. He was a world-man in reach and size.

And so the real Jesus follower is a world-man in heart and outlook. It's a big thing to be a real Christian, bigger than some of us have taken in.

The thoughtful Christian is eager for a clear grasp of the world movement, especially at the present time, which by common consent is a critical time.

This is to be distinctively a world outlook, not American, except as we are a part of the whole. It is an attempt at an impersonal, de-

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tached, accurate appraisal of present-world conditions.

Religiously, the fact that a man is in a pulpit gives no clue to his belief in the essentials of the Gospel of Christ, if you don't know personally about his belief. The fact that a man is in the membership, or the officary, of the Church gives no clue either to his belief in the essentials, nor to his moral character, if you don't know personally about him.

By essentials I am thinking of five simple things, a supernatural Book, a supernatural God-Man, the distinctive death of that man as apart in kind from all other deaths, the damnable badness of sin as treason against God, and the necessity of personal choice for present character and future destiny. And I am speaking broadly of the world situation.

Morally, it is a commonplace that everywhere there is a distinct heart-breaking breakdown. It is most marked on the Continent of Europe, and distinctly marked in Great Britain and the United States.

Educationally, the standards of efficiency and of organization were never higher. But there is a change from the distinctively Christian standard of a generation ago to the Greek

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standards, in culture, philosophy, ethics, and natural religion.

Character making and mental discipline were once the common standard in the university world; now technical preparation for money-making crowds the old ideal hard against the wall.

The hypothesis of the evolution of mankind, up from the lowest forms, across the lines of distinct species, is commonly taught as though a proven fact, in spite of the groups of biologists in every nation that point out its scientific absurdity.

The breakdown in moral fibre in the educational world is marked, in varying degree, everywhere. I am speaking of the whole world situation.

In commerce, industry, finance, there is a tremendous speeding up, with immense unemployment in some places. But everywhere is the unravelling of the moral fibre. Guaranties were never so sharply scrutinized as in business to-day.

The political situation is of tensest interest. Europe is the axis of the action of the race. The national alignment there is into two groups, roughly.

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In one group is Germany, Russia, Turkey and Bulgaria, with Hungary and Austria in closest sympathetic touch.

In the other group is Great Britain, France, Belgium, and Italy, seriously affected by divisive tactics, yet practically together, at least not apart. With them is the new group of Balkan nations from the Baltic down to the Mediterranean; largely under French tutelage and leadership. And our own country hangs on the outer ragged edge, most of us wanting to be in helpful touch, if a practical way can be found, but with partisanship beclouding the issue.

The significant thing to note is that it is practically the Armistice alignment. And it is striking that the Allies are not acting strongly together.

It becomes startling to note that Germany has practically dominated the European and the world situation since the Armistice, and does to-day. It led in starting the war, in stopping the war, and is still, strategically, with subtle finesse, the actual leader in the world situation. Its actions have controlled the exchange markets; they control trade; trade controls the world.

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The Treaty of Versailles, unstatesmanlike, itself a compromise among the Allies, radically affected by American non-participation, a strange hybrid of highest idealism and arbitrary exactions, impossible of fulfillment by Germany, without virtual economic slavery and loss of national self-respect and unity, that treaty toughened the German leaders' purpose to finish their fling, if indeed any toughening were needed.

The behind-the-scenes situation in Germany is of intense interest. On the surface it is a republic, though still commonly called an empire, the "Reich." Actually the same essential group that was in control before and during the war, and at the Armistice, is still in control.

But they had lost control of the common masses through loss of the war. The Ruhr incident has welded the masses together again with an intense hatred of France. Was France egged on for this purpose?

The leaders have staged a terrific bankruptcy, regardless of suffering among their own people. They may stage revolution, and even a break-up of the empire. The thing to mark is they are in essential control behind

the scenes. The old-time militarism and high finance combined hold the driving reins.

Under this leadership Germany controls Russia as the dog the bone in set teeth. Early in the war Lenine and his group were brought from Switzerland, across Germany, in a special train, hermetically sealed so far as its socialistic atmosphere was concerned, and let loose in Russia.

The whole subsequent story of Russia followed. From being an enemy of Germany, Russia came into closest touch with Germany, and under actual control.

When the time is ripe for the next big German move, any Russian leader who may prove too stubborn can be subtly assisted into the next world, in the fashion not unfamiliar to European Machiavellianism.

The practical control of Turkey by Germany is as complete. It was a German-trained and officered Turkish army that whipped Greece, ably aided by the bitter conflict of ambitions among the Allies immediately interested.

The return of Turkey to Europe, dripping with red Christian blood, was the biggest German scoring since the Armistice. The new

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Balkan states are easy meat for the intriguing Teutonic ax.

Under all else commerce dominates, as ever. Full recognition of Russia by the English labour government, with the other European nations scurrying in to get their share of trade, would be Germany's latest big scoring.

There is an intensely interesting bit of local colouring here. Control of the European-Asiatic trade routes was the underlying cause of the World War. England controlled and controls the Mediterranean, known as the world's greatest trade route.

Germany's ambitious Berlin-Bagdad rival route to the East was, of course, lost to her through the war. Through national jealousies no one nation now controls that route, though Great Britain expected to. The Central Europe-Danube-Black Sea route is hampered with endless governmental red tape.

But there is now in actual operation, through German initiative, the Berlin-Baltic-Volga-Caspian all-water route, through Russia, by canal, sea and river, through to Persia and Asia, with boundless trade possibilities.

In the Orient, Japan is the dominating power, and will remain so politically, in spite

of the unprecedented earthquake. If one can imagine Chinese manpower armed and trained by Japan, and Russian manpower trained and armed by Germany; if one can imagine an understanding between the two, and remembers the worthlessness of treaties and gentlemen's agreements when in conflict with national ambitions, it may well send the thoughtful man to his knees.

It becomes increasingly clear that the Armistice was merely a truce. The world war is yet to be fought out. When? In our day? Ask the group behind the scenes in Germany.

But a frontal attack on France need not be expected. That would kill the German golden-egged Ruhr goose. The likelier thing is a back-door attack, through Russia, on the French-backed group of Baltic-Balkan states.

There is certainly a crisis coming. Those in closest touch with actual conditions in Europe are agreed that there is a tremendous crisis impending. Is it *the* crisis? No one can answer. Watch the Jew movement spoken of in the preceding chapter.

It is striking to note the growth of dictator rule in Europe, *i. e.*, arbitrary personal rule, without check or restraint by constitution,

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parliament, law or vote. At this moment nine national units of Europe are under dictator rule, including more than half the population of Europe.

The antichrist king of kings, whenever he may appear, will be a dictator, of the extreme type. Europe is getting used to this sort of thing, and is apathetically acquiescent.

The thoughtful man prays with hushed breath, "Thy kingdom come." He seeks grace to hold steady through any clearing-up storm that may break.

THE EARTH THE SPIRIT BATTLE- FIELD OF THE UNIVERSE

This old earth of ours is the moral centre of the universe. Its importance is not measured by its size but by what is happening on it.

It is an experiment station, *the* experiment station of the universe. All eyes above and below, of angels and demons, and of Him upon the throne, are centred on this small planet, eagerly watching.

God is making an experiment. Man is the stuff being experimented with. It is an experi-

ment of love. It is a holy experiment. It is putting a great truth to the test of experience, actual experience in real life.

The starting-point in the experiment is this: love must do something. This is its very life. It must find a vent. It must do the most and best that can be done.

God is love. Some day we men will find out just what that means, how much, how deep. All that God is in Himself, His intelligence and wisdom, His power and purity, the very spirit of His being, that is what love really is.

And so God must do something. He must find a vent. He must do the best and the most. That means He must create a being in His own likeness. That would be the most and the best.

So He created man. Man is the outcome, and the best possible outcome, of love, of God Himself. He is a bit of God. What there is in man that is not like God doesn't belong to man. It isn't human. It's a foul addition.

That likeness means moral character, of course. It means purity, the holiness of wholeness, the absence of what ought not to be, the presence of all that ought to be there.

But it means merely decidedly more, moral

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character *as a result of choice*. Freedom of choice, *and*, using that freedom to choose only the true and right, this is distinctively the image of God.

Now, God could give us the freedom of choice and action, but that is as far as He could go. We must decide how we would use it. He could make us innocent. He could not give us character. Character comes only through choice.

The power of choice is creative. Choice creates character. Right choice changes innocence into virtue, good character. Wrong choice changes innocence into bad, weak, poor character. Choice is the instrument that makes the indentation in us that we call character.

This is the full, fair chance that every man everywhere has, the power of free choice. Right choice makes strong character. And strong character is the highest personal achievement of life.

So God made us actually free. He insisted that man would use his freedom to choose only right. This would be the final outcome. That is the great, holy experiment.

Satan contested the experiment. He said

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the thing couldn't be done. With all the malicious cunning of which he is past-master, he set himself to make the experiment fail.

That runs back into the story of how there came to be this strange, foul spirit-prince called Satan. But that's another story, or rather it's an earlier chapter of this same story. It has in it the same essential elements as this later earth experiment.

Satan has done, and is doing, his best and his worst to kill the race off, by disease, violence, ignorance, lust, and so on. God has determined that the race shall live till the experiment is fairly worked out, and His great love in making man free is revealed and vindicated.

The strongest instinct of the human race, the pure, holy sex instinct, so vilely perverted through Satan's touch, is divinely implanted to keep the race alive. And, so far, on that point, Satan is outdone.

This is why Jesus came. Jesus was God coming as a man to see the experiment fairly through to a finish. This is why Jesus came *as* He came, on the human level. He was a true human man, indeed the only fully true human. He came to make it clear that man could be

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trusted with free choice, and would use it to choose only the right.

This explains the temptations that came to Jesus, from earliest conscious years in Nazareth, through the Wilderness, the Judean-Galilean years, *and* Gethsemane, *and* Calvary. And every temptation thrust in His path, so cunningly staged, was aimed at this one point, to swerve Him, if only a hair, from the one path of right choice. Choosing the right was never made so difficult.

And, be it keenly marked, Jesus held true. And He held true *on the human level*, that is, by the use of His choosing power, strengthened by the use of His knees. So every man may who will, and every man must who does.

He was obedient in choosing to do the one only right, the Father's will for Him. And He persisted in that choice, even though it led Him through the terrible experience of the Cross.

This explains why Jesus came *when* He came. It was at the time when the human tide was at its lowest moral ebb. The racial tide was running out morally. It was His coming that turned the tide back toward flood.

It was the fullness of time, the fullness of

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the racial opportunity. It was the fullness of man's failure to use his opportunity. It was the pathetic fullness of his need of help. It was the fullness of Satan's cunning and power.

It was the fullness of circumstantial readiness. Roman organization and roads, Greek language and culture, and Hebrew revelation of the true God, combined in that readiness.

This explains why Jesus came *where* He came, to the earth. It is the experiment station for love's great holy experiment. It is little in comparison with the other globes swinging in space. But it is the moral centre of the universe. Its importance lies not in its mere bulk, but in the events taking place here.

You can't measure the importance of things by their size. A small cudget of a boy, whom I could comfortably tuck under my arm, can sit on the back of a huge mule and bend its will and giant strength absolutely to his own.

Scientists tell us there is no evidence that other planets are inhabited. There is ample evidence contrariwise that they cannot sustain life. Our planet is alone in being habitable. It is the one globe where great moral issues are being worked out. It is the spirit battle-field of the universe.

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This explains why Jesus *died*. In yielding voluntarily to the hateful Cross Jesus made clear God's estimate and hatred of evil choice. Sin, the outcome of evil choice, deserves what the Cross did to Jesus.

In dying Jesus broke Satan's stranglehold on man got through persuading us to wrong choice. And He broke our hearts quite with the sheer love of what He did in dying.

And more—He loosened out His own power to strengthen our choosing power, so we would be helped to choose only the right and to persist in that choice through the sorest tests.

The Trail Running Through the Book.

Nothing in the Book of God stands out clearer than this, that a terrific spirit contest is being waged on the earth. God, and that strange foul spirit-prince, Satan, are in fiercest conflict, with man as the decisive and deciding factor. It is not a question of which one has the greater power. There is no question as to that.

The thing is on a higher level. It is this: which one can win man's choice, freely given. Satan doesn't play fair. He deceives man. He slanders God. God insists on playing fair.

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He knows that He will win. In the outcome man will use his free choice to choose the only right.

A quick run through the Book has fascinating interest here. The second sentence on the first page tells of a catastrophe pointing to an earlier chapter of the conflict.¹

The Eden story tells the cunning attempt to make a breach between man and God, and its success, through lying deceit, and through the appeal to selfish motives.

Leaf after leaf of the Book reveals a continual moral contest going on. God is ever pleading, but never interfering with man's freedom. Some evil power is in action behind the scenes. And always *man* is the centre of action, and man's choice is the one thing aimed at.

Like an ever-recurrent strain of music in some great symphony is the ceaseless appeal to man to choose right, with the minor wail of wrong choice, weak wobbling, and the joyous major strain of strong right choice, running throughout.

In the newer leaves the presence of the New

¹ See chapter, "The Accurate Reading of the First Page of Genesis."

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Man makes a crisis in the contest. The bitter attack on Him begins at His birth, and persists tirelessly through His manhood. It is staged with peculiarly subtle cunning in the Wilderness. The ugly baying of the hounds is never out of His ears through the service years.

Then the Cross, with hate at its worst, malignity at its bitterest, cruelty at a new maliciousness, brings the contest to a climax unknown before or since.

But that New Man straightens up the falling standard of right choice. He loosens out anew the power to help men reach up to the standard.

The contest persists with new vigour through Acts, the history book of the New Testament. The letters of Paul and Peter and John reveal its intensity. But now there's a new note of power ringing out.

And the prophetic Book at the end pictures the contest coming up to a climax, terrific in its intensity, stinging in its defeat for the evil contestant, glorious in its victory for God and the God-Man.

A closer run through the Book brings certain passages into the limelight.

The statesman-seer of the Arabian Desert recognizes the fight with Amalek as a conflict

between opposing unseen spirit forces behind the scenes. The literal reading of his comment is most striking. A hand is lifted up against the authority of God, and the warfare involved will continue through the coming generations.¹

Elisha's prayer opens the eyes of his attendant to see what he already clearly saw, the marshalling of vast unseen spirit soldiery against Israel's enemy, and so the tide of battle turned at a critical junction.²

The intensity and reality of this conflict in the upper spirit world stands out nowhere more than in Daniel's vision. A tense protracted struggle, running through weeks of earth's calendar, is between high principals in the upper spirit realm. And the tide of spirit battle strikingly turns in favour of the little praying knot of men on the Tigris banks.³

When the thirty-five delegations told, with ringing voices and shining faces, of the power over evil forces attending their efforts, our Lord Jesus quietly said, "I was standing by, looking on, when Satan was hurled with the

¹ Exodus 17:8-15.

² 2 Kings 6:14-17, and throughout chapter 7.

³ Daniel 10; especially verses 11-13.

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swiftness of a lightning flash out of the upper heavens." The conflict was clear to Him.¹

Naturally Jesus recognized the real meaning of that conflict. He knew well that the Calvary transaction, once it was finished, meant a stinging defeat for the high leader in the spirit battle.

Under the darkening shadow of the Cross He said, in effect: "Now is at hand the crisis in the great spirit conflict centering on the earth. Now the one who is ruling the evil order of things shall be decisively defeated, and left an outcast derelict at the close of the fight."²

The conflict remains open after a decisive defeat because Jesus was acting on our behalf. He was giving man a fresh start. The ultimate victory must be ours, and will be, through His power.

There could be no clearer putting of this thing than in that tremendous paragraph at the climax of Paul's circular letter to the Ephesian circle of churches.³ The real fight of fights in life is not against men, but against the com-

¹ Luke 10: 17-20.

² John 12: 31; 14: 30.

³ Ephesians 6: 10-17.

pactly organized spirit forces in action behind men. And the outcome is absolutely assured.

Just one bit may serve as an index to the militant pages of John's Patmos vision. One of the coming pitched battles is simply but realistically described in the very heart of that little end book. And the secret of victory in it runs back to Calvary, and the victors' loyalty to the Man who died there, and lived again.¹

And now the evidence thickens that things are working up to a tremendous climax. There's a sharp turn coming. God has been, strangely fair to His evil-spirit Contestant. Yet not strange for God. Now it seems clear that the New Man is about to step into direct action again. Yet man's freedom of individual initiative remains ever the centre of action, never interfered with, never infringed upon.

All this brings sharply to the fore how much it means to be a real Christian, following simply, fully, unreservedly, where the Holy Spirit leads. It does not mean merely being saved, great as that is.

It's taking sides with God. Living the fully surrendered life is helping God. It helps His great love experiment. It shortens the time

¹ Revelation 12: 7-12.

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involved. That's why the spirit conflict is so terrifically intense in one's own experience, sometimes.

There is no question about the outcome. The experiment has run a long time, by earth's calendars. That is God's fairness to every one concerned, including the devil. But the outcome is settled. It's as sure as that Jesus lived again after dying, and still lives.

It won't fail, for it is love's own experiment. And love never faileth. It can't. It is of the very essence of God.

EARTHQUAKES: THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Three Starting-points.

There's a throne above the earth, within easy reach, a place of masterful control. There's a *Man* on the throne. He's kin to us, bone of our bone, experience of our experience.

He spent a generation of time on the earth, the average span of human life. He had a terrific, a tragic, experience down here. Now He's on a throne, *the* throne. He has all power on earth, and above it, and below.

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But, His heart is down here. His sensitive index-finger is never off the pulse-beat of the race. He has a plan for things down here. It has two parts, a personal part, personal to us men; and a racial part. Both parts are personal to Him.

His plans never go hit-and-miss. Things down here go hit-and-miss, helter-skelter, especially of late. His plans never.

There have been some great happenings on the earth, terrific sometimes. All happenings have one of three starting-points, God, or the devil, or man.

Some trace directly to man's action, *i. e.*, railroad accidents, the *Titanic* sinking, the Firth of Forth Bridge breakdown, the Johnstown flood, floods due to deforestation, in China, and America, and so on.

Some are due to Satanic activities. These may be indirect, through human agencies, as in aggressive wars. They may be direct, as in some storms. Job's experiences, and the Galilean storm that threatened Jesus' life, are illustrations in point. Usually Satanic influence is quite impossible to trace.

Some are nature's forces at work, unusual frosts, terrific storms, earthquakes, volcanoes,

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and the like. Nature is God at work behind the scenes, direct or indirect.

Nature is God's method in action. His hand is never off the intricate machinery we call nature. The slightest withdrawal of control or restraint, and something exceptional takes place.

God is always controlled by a purpose, and it is always a purpose of love, strong tender love. Satan is always controlled by a purpose, and it is always a purpose of hate, bitter, malignant, sleepless hate.

Man is the only one of the three who seems to lack the broad outlook and grasp, characteristically, with exceptions. He is so busy ploughing the furrow he never sees the field.

He is so intent chopping down trees he never sees the forest. He is so absorbed with his own personal plans, and quite properly so, that he doesn't see beyond the fence of his own front-yard.

Lately one of the most terrific happenings has made the world gasp. The Japan earthquake is reckoned one of the worst calamities of any sort, and the worst earthquake on record, in that land of earthquakes, or any other.

Occurring in the area of densest population,

it has made a new record, in the number of the dead, the distress of the living, the dislocation of all life and trade, and in the material loss involved.

Incidentally, it has been the opportunity for a rare revealing of the real brotherhood of the race. The quick spontaneous outpouring of gold has done more in a day to sweeten up international relations than many international conferences, and years of skilled diplomacy.

Has such a disaster any significance? The thoughtful man finds the question pushing insistently in. There are two common answers. The scientists say it is a result of the working of a law of the earth's structure.

One hundred and seventy-odd years ago England had a notable earthquake. The Bishop of London, in common with other leading clergymen of the time, preached a sermon. In it he said the earthquake was a judgment by God on the people for their wickedness.

Here are two contrasted answers. Which is right? Either? Or neither? Or, possibly, both?

That question sent me to the library. I spent much time in some of the largest libraries of our eastern cities, as my appointments took

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me here and there. Then I gathered up rather carefully all the Book of God says on the subject. And what I am saying here is simply a bit of what I dug up out of these mines.

What the Scientists Say.

There is a science of earthquakes, seismography, and of earthquake instruments. There is a large permanent literature, in many languages. There are periodicals published. There have been three congresses, within twenty-odd years, held in Central Europe, attended by experts from many nations. The governmental University of Japan has an endowed chair, whose professor has become a recognized authority. All these are devoted to the study of the earthquake phenomena.

No part of the earth's surface, and no sea, is free of earthquake activities. There are four commonly recognized areas of special liability, and in the order named, *i. e.*, Japan, the Mediterranean Sea and countries, the Western coast of South America, and our own Pacific Coast. Usually the greatest activity is found where the highest mountain ranges, and the deepest ocean bottoms, occur in proximity.

The Mediterranean area includes the Holy

Land. One of the world's greatest geologists, George Frederick Wright, dead now some ten years or so, classed as the greatest geological expert of his time, calls attention to the geological fault in the Holy Land. "Fault" is the term, you remember, the geologists use for a break in the earth's surface crust. Mr. Wright visited all parts of the earth in his researches.

He declared that the worst, or greatest, geological fault on the earth's surface runs roughly north and south, through Jerusalem and Palestine, up into the Caucasus between the Black and Caspian Seas, and down into the African Continent. That would include the Dead Sea region.

When the Japan earthquake occurred the leading New York City morning paper carried, within a week, a prominently displayed article, written by an American seismographer, in which it was said that the cities of our Atlantic seaboard are immune. We need never fear anything of the sort there. Perhaps the head-line display gave greater prominence to that point than was intended.

Yet, many of us can recall the Charleston earthquake of 1886. It was so called because the damage was greatest in that leading city

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of South Carolina. But the scientific records show that it was felt from New York City down to Florida, sharply felt as far north as Brooklyn, and out into the Mississippi Valley. It was felt in the whole chain of eastern coast cities, and in some instances decidedly felt.

It occurred along what the geologists call the "Falls line." There is a distinct geological line in the earth's surface, skirting our eastern seaboard, from Boston down to Savannah. It is called the "Falls line" because as the rivers flow from the interior toward the sea there occurs a distinct fault or surface-break, running as indicated.

This "Falls line" is a geological fault. The Charleston earthquake occurred on that "Falls line." It is distinctly a line of special liability. And while nothing notable has occurred there since 1886, and nothing may occur for many years, still it stands geologically marked as a distinct line of liability.

One recalls that it runs through our area of densest population, with our greatest storage of material wealth, and our leading cities. It runs through New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, Charleston, and Savannah.

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In brief, roughly, this is a little of what I dug up out of the tedious technical standard scientific books.

What the Book Says.

Then I turned to the Book of God. Happily we have a book, *the* Book. The thoughtful man turns to his book. It becomes noteworthy in this connection to mark the threefold value of this rare Book.

There is the personal side to it. It makes one know his need of a Saviour. It leads him to the Saviour, and feeds and guides his daily life. That is the most familiar thing.

Then, it has a world outlook, a refreshingly broad world-grasp, and plainly a world-plan, a race-plan. There is a third thing. It gives light on every serious question the thoughtful man may ask. I have not found it to fail yet. And there is light here.

I gathered out all of its statements, direct and indirect, about earthquakes. I planned to group them carefully. But I didn't. I didn't need to. They fell of themselves, naturally, into three groups.

The first group is the record of earthquakes. There are some ten of these. Some of these

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are apparently quite limited in the area affected. Some are notable, becoming dates to mark other events by. There was an earthquake at the death of Jesus, and again at His resurrection.

The word earthquake is not used in connection with the Flood, nor with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The word does not occur up to the record of these events.

But the language used, and what occurred, and the results, make it clear, practically to the point of proof, that both these events were directly connected with earthquake activities.

If so, then the commonest tradition of the race, namely that of the Flood, was connected with earthquake activities. And the most intensive scar, the ugliest, worst scar, to be found on the earth's surface, namely the Dead Sea and its immediate surroundings, resulted from earthquake activities.

And one notes in passing that it occurred on the line of that greatest or worst geological fault on the earth's surface. And, in that case, the occurrence is distinctly spoken of as a judgment on men for their gross wickedness. This is one group of passages, the recorded earthquakes.

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The second group of passages is found in the prophetic pages. In the Old Testament there is spoken of repeatedly from end to end of the prophetic section, a little group of connected events. If taken in their surface meaning, the first-flush meaning of the words, this group of events clearly has not yet taken place.

Of course, that first-flush meaning is explained away by many scholars, and a meaning suited to the particular teaching in mind is given. But if taken at what might properly be called their *common* meaning, the simple first-flush meaning of the language used, quite clearly these events have not yet happened. If they are to occur in that first-flush meaning it is clear that it will be at some future time. That would make them prophetic in the predictive sense.

Now, in that group of events, two things stand out sharp and clear. There is to be a Crisis on the earth, a tremendous crisis, earth-wide. It comes, not as a result of God's planning, but as a distinct logical result of man's action.

It is to be followed by a blessed New Order of Things on this same earth where we are living now. That new order is commonly

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spoken of as the Kingdom. These are the two things, the Crisis, and the blessed New Order of Earth Things.

And the thing to mark keenly, just now, is this: in connection with that Crisis there occurs an earthquake. It is not a series of earthquakes, only one, but it is a terrific earthquake. It centres in Jerusalem and Palestine, and extends out until it actually affects the whole race and the whole earth.

Let me quote one passage from a long list of similar passages. It will serve as an index passage. "The earth is utterly broken, the earth is rent asunder, the earth is shaken violently, the earth shall stagger like a drunken man, and shall sway to and fro like a hammock. . . ." ¹ This is the Old Testament teaching.

Now, turn to the New Testament. There is one book here classed as prophetic, the book of the Revelation, at the very end. Again, here is a little group of events spoken of repeatedly, from various angles.

And again, if the words be taken in their common, first-flush, surface meaning, these events clearly have not yet taken place. If they

¹ Isaiah 24: 19, 20.

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are to occur, in what seems the common man's understanding of language, it would be future. That would make these things prophetic in the predictive sense.

Now, in this group of events *three things* stand sharply out. There is a Crisis coming, earth-wide in sweep, and terrific in intensity. It is not of God's planning, but is the outcome of man's activities.

That Crisis is cleared up by the personal coming of Christ in great power. It is followed by a New Order of Things on this earth under the personal sway of Christ as a world King.

These are the three things that stand out in the prophetic book of the New Testament, a Crisis, the personal coming of Christ, the beginning of a blessed New Order on the earth.

The thing that catches one's eye, just now, is this: in connection with that Crisis there is an earthquake spoken of, not a series, but one. But that one earthquake will be the worst ever experienced.

It will centre in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, but be felt throughout the entire world. Again let me quote one passage as an index to the whole list. "And there was a great

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earthquake, such as was not since man was on the earth, so great an earthquake, so mighty.”¹

It will be noted at once how these two groups of teachings, centuries apart in their writing, fit together. In the Old Testament, the Crisis and then the Kingdom.

In the New, the Crisis, the coming back of Christ to clear up the Crisis, and start the Kingdom conditions on the earth. This is the second group, the teaching in the prophetic pages of both Old and New Testaments.

Now, the third group is made up of our Lord Jesus' teaching about earthquakes. It is of interest at once to note that He gave some specific teaching on this subject.

Within a week of the tragic end of His life, there occurred the talk on Olivet, with four of the inner group of disciples. That talk is preserved to us, much of it, in Matthew twenty-four and twenty-five, Mark thirteen, and Luke twenty-one.

Jesus speaks there of three things, a terrific world-wide Crisis coming, His own return to clear up the Crisis, and to start a New Order of Things on the earth.

One notes at once how this fits into those

¹ Revelation 16: 18.

prophetic pages of the Old Testament already on record, and into those of the New Testament written afterward. Of course, it is natural to expect this. Yet there is a zest in finding it so for one's self.

Then our Lord gives a new touch, which quickly catches the ear. He speaks of the characteristics of the time intervening between when He is talking and the actual working out of these events. He is careful to say, repeatedly, at various intervals, "but the full end (of the present order of things) is not yet."

Note these characteristics, wars and rumours of wars, nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom, famines, pestilences, *and earthquakes*. One quickly recognizes that these have been, in varying degree, the common characteristics of the centuries since the words were spoken on Olivet.

It is notable that Jesus speaks, not of one earthquake, as in these prophetic pages, but of a series of earthquakes. These run through the intervening time until that Crisis would come, with its one earthquake, the worst and most terrific of all. There is a fascination in seeing how His words fit into the other teachings. From His standpoint there is a sig-

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nificance in these strange earth-shaking upheavals.

Back to the Scientists Again.

At once there arises a leading question. Has there been an increase in earthquakes, their frequency, and intensity? It would be natural to expect such an increase, and to find it intensifying greatly as things headed up to that climax and crisis.

This, of course, is strictly a question for the scientists. And the striking thing to note is that they discuss it, not of course, from the angle we are following, but from their own point of view as scientific students of phenomena.

They speak of the better, fuller registration of earthquakes by perfected instruments, and of the greater publicity in the press. These things suggest that perhaps there has not been an increase, but simply that public attention has been directed more to the matter.

Yet the scientists reach the conclusion that there has been an increase, and a steadily marked increase, through the centuries, and especially in the last twenty-five years. It is even discussed whether this earthquake phe-

nomenon is not a characteristic of the Christian era, because of the scarcity before, and the frequency since, the beginning of the Christian era.

Out of the mass of statistics I have picked the following as representative of all. Robert Mallet, F. R. S., a British geologist who is commonly accepted as an authority on the statistics of earthquakes, has gathered the statistics into five groups, chronologically.

The lessening of the number of years in each group, and the increase in frequency and intensity of the earthquakes, will be noted. In the seventeen hundred years before Christ there were fifty-eight earthquakes recorded, four disastrous.

In the first nine hundred years after the birth of Christ one hundred and ninety-seven are recorded, fifteen disastrous; the next six hundred years, five hundred and thirty-two recorded, forty-four disastrous.

In the next three hundred years, two thousand eight hundred and four are recorded, with one hundred disastrous; the next fifty years three thousand two hundred and four recorded, and fifty-three disastrous.

That brings his calculation up to 1850.

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Since that time it is figured that the increase has steadily grown. The year 1906-1907 was unusually marked, and the increase since distinctly marked. The three congresses of experts have all been held within the past twenty-three years.

In December of 1920 the worst earthquake up to that time occurred in the province of Kansu, in Western China, when it was said "the mountains walked." And now in September of 1923, the Japan earthquake is reckoned the very worst yet recorded.

Previous to Kansu in 1920, and Japan, 1923, three stand out as the most notable, *i. e.*, Lisbon, and Calabria (the Italy area, Mediterranean), and in South America.

The one at Lisbon in Portugal is noted for its wide extent, as well as for the severity at its centre. It affected three continents. It extended across the Atlantic Ocean, whose waves increased from two feet in height to twenty, and the waters became inky black.

It was felt from Canada on the west, to the Alps and Central Germany on the east; the British Isles on the north, up to Sweden on the northeast, and south into Morocco, an esti-

mated area of 3,300 miles one way by 2,700 the other.

The Calabrian earthquake, in the Italy area, was not so extensive territorially, but it continued, at frequent intervals, with varying intensity, through as much as four years.

And, now, it is notable that since the Japan occurrence every week has brought news, in the daily press, of one to four or five, some slight, some serious, in widely separated places. And one recalls the words of our Lord, "earthquakes *in divers places*."

Literally no phrase so marks the variations in location of the earthquake occurrences of recent months. This is the answer of these technical scientific books. There has been a distinctly marked increase in the frequency and intensity of earthquakes up until the present hour.

The Significance.

What then is the significance of earthquakes? The answer of the Book, in the light of this mass of scientific data, seems to be as follows:

Earthquakes are *not* a result of God acting

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in judgment. There may be the element of judgment involved sometimes, incidentally. One can't know enough to know certainly. But God is not acting in judgment, happily for the race. 'This is the day of grace, His wondrous grace. Calamities and disasters are never primarily nor chiefly a result of God's acting in judgment.

And earthquakes are not *merely* the result of the working of a law of the earth's structure. This is true so far as it goes. They are *a* result of such a law at work. But this is incidental. It concerns simply the *process* involved. There is more beyond and deeper in.

The simple teaching of the Book seems clearly to be this: earthquakes are a warning. They are a repeated, unmistakable, gracious warning. They warn us that things on the earth are heading up toward that great climactic moral Crisis.

That Crisis brings the Christ back into direct action on the earth again. The immediate purpose of His coming back is not for judgment. It is to clear up the Crisis, and to start things going on the earth, this same old earth, in a better way, the best way, God's way. There will be certain radical, moral changes.

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But the same laws of nature and of mankind will continue as always.

It should be noted that that Crisis coming is not any part of God's plan. It is heart-breaking to Him. It is the working out of man's use of his freedom of choice and action. Happily, it is for a short time. The one fully truly human Man comes to help us men out of our terrible bungling and blundering. He comes to help us work out the original Eden plan of life on the earth.

Three words should be linked, not one but three, Crisis—Christ's coming—Kingdom. The Crisis is the clearing-up storm. Then follows a long spell of wonderful moral weather on the earth.

This stands out as the one teaching of the Book of God as to the significance of earthquakes. They are a repeated, unmistakable, gracious warning that things are heading up to that Crisis-climax, to the personal return of Christ, and to the blessed New Order of Things on the earth immediately following.

The Incidental Meaning: Four Commonplaces.

Now, there is another word to be added. There is another bit of teaching. It is in-

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ferential. It is incidental. Yet, though secondary it is of intense interest, and it is of the first importance. It is this: earthquakes spell out man's utter helpless dependence on God.

No offspring is so wholly dependent on the mother as the human babe. Man is yet more helplessly, hopelessly dependent for his daily life on God than the human infant.

That will sound rhetorical at first, too strong a putting of the thing. But if you think into the thing only a moment you will see how actually, realistically true it is. If a mother deserted her babe, actually threw the child out, or left it untouched, still it would live for several hours usually, or even a day or more.

If *God* took His hands off the life of man, the whole race of men, each man, the earth where we live, our life would snuff out quicker than you can half-blink your eyelid.

I want to bring to you some of the homely facts about that. But, meanwhile, note this: man's attitude toward God stands in sharpest contrast to that utter dependent helplessness.

Nothing could be more outstanding in life than man's spirit of utter *independence* of God. Sometimes it is simply ignoring Him, leaving Him severely out of everything, thinking,

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planning, home, social, business, legislation, administration, diplomacy, conferences, everything.

God is severely ignored, as a rule, with some purely perfunctory exceptions on certain public occasions. There are without a question fine personal exceptions. These only make the general atmosphere more pronounced, and frosty.

Sometimes the thing goes further with the common crowd, a scurrilous, inveterate habit of blaspheming God, His name, Himself, His administration of things.

Man's utter freedom of choice and decision and action, *and*, man's utter helpless hopeless dependence on God for his daily breath and food and all, these are the two most outstanding traits of human life.

Man can't escape from God, and he can't escape from the love, the patience, the faithfulness, of God. Even our inveterate ignoring, and blasphemous sneering at and vilifying of God, doesn't stop nor restrain that strong, patient thoughtful touch on all humankind, and all life.

Look at four homely commonplaces for a brief moment. We are all in such a speeded-

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up rush that we reluctantly spare a fleeting moment even for this. But let us deliberately take a half-look.

Take *the physical atmosphere of the earth*. There is one thing in which our little planet is radically different from every other globe swinging in space, so far as facts can be ascertained by scientific research.

The earth has an atmosphere. It is covered by a gaseous envelope. That atmosphere is what makes the earth habitable. It is a fascinating bit of study, this same atmosphere. It is a combination of certain gases. They are combined in an exquisitely delicate adjustment, just so much oxygen, just so much nitrogen, with a minute bit of another less-known gas.

The delicacy of proportionate adjustment is a chemical commonplace. It figures in here, and figures in big. The slightest change in proportion, a little less oxygen or more, a little more nitrogen or less, and man could not live. We would burn up, or suffocate. Too much oxygen would burn us up: too much nitrogen would choke life out. A change of proportion would end things for us all.

That delicately adjusted proportion never

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fails. Day and night, day in and day out, it continues, or, shall I more accurately say, is continued. Only God's creative touch can explain it. Man is constantly dependent on God, helplessly dependent, for the atmosphere, its delicately adjusted combination, its continuance.

Then, there's *our breath*. The continuance of life in our bodies, individually, depends on that. The blood circulates. But the breath is the touch of individual life. The blood circulates before the breath comes, before birth. It is the coming of breath at the moment of birth that begins individual, separate life.

Breathing is the distinctive individual life act. With its coming life begins. It ceases; life is gone. Now, that breath is God's own touch of life in the body.

Life in our bodies is subject to certain laws, of course. That's the human side of continued living. There are the things we do, and must do, to fit into the law of our bodies.

Sleep, rest, exercise, food, the quality and quantity of the air we breathe, these belong to the human side of life. Ignorance, neglect, stubborn insistence on what we prefer regard-

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less of the law of our bodies, these lessen the length of life, and its vigour, too.

It's a law of our bodies that a man can hold on to life as long as he pleases, and in proportion to his intelligent obedience to his bodily needs. That is, within certain strict limitations of time. But then those limitations of time are away beyond the common length of life.

But under all else, still it holds good, that it is God's constant touch that keeps the breath of life in our bodies. That touch of His is continual. His hand is never off, creatively. We don't run on the storage-battery plan, but on the trolley plan, a continuous current by God's own direct touch.

Man may leave God out, and does, or curses Him for being in. God never leaves any man out. His patience is beyond words. Every breath reminds us of our helpless dependence on God.

“The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord searching out all his innermost part” (or the inward parts of the belly, *i. e.*, the abdominal part, where bodily life centres).

Nothing is so penetrating and pervasive as light. The breath of man is God's own direct

touch pervading every bit of one's physical being, even as light penetrates and pervades.

The breath continually goes everywhere in the body, vivifying, cleansing, repairing waste, searching insistently with its current of life into the innermost crevices and crannies, and where there are no crevices or crannies.

This is a second homely commonplace, every breath you take tells out graphically your utter helpless dependence on God for the momentary continuance of physical life. And physical life is the basis of all the higher forms of life.

Then the motion of the earth in space is another endless reminder of our dependence. Nothing is more awe-inspiring than the way in which the earth hangs and revolves in space.

The motion of the earth has been the profoundest study of the greatest minds. The greatest achievements of astronomical science have to do with explaining this peculiarly complex motion.

There is the daily rotation on its axis; the yearly evolution around the sun; and then there is a number of motions through longer time, long cycles of time.

The earth revolves around the sun in what is called an ellipse, not a circle, but an ellipse.

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That means not one focus centre but two. The sun is one centre around which it moves. But there's another. Between two centres, under two sets of influences, it is held in space, and most delicately adjusted in its relation and motions.

The thing is so complex that it is only with difficulty understood even by the experts. There is always the irregularity spoken of, a shifting and tilting through centuries, and always a margin of uncertainties and variations not yet ascertained.

The only explanation seems to be this: the earth is balanced in space, and kept moving just as it does move, by some invisible intelligent self-sufficient personal power. The object is to secure one result, just one result, such a relation to the sun as will give constantly just the degree of heat and of cold needful to make it habitable by man. The slightest variation, for the briefest time, and we would burn up or freeze up.

This is the third homely commonplace that lets us see man's helpless dependence on God every moment.

There is another, *the earthquake*. And now we are getting back to the starting-point again.

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Just what the inside of the earth is like is one of the most discussed points. The oldest supposition is that it is a ball of liquid-hot substances, inconceivably hot. The surface has cooled off to the habitable point, and is still cooling.

There has been some recent scientific repudiation of this theory. But it still stands as the likeliest supposition, almost to the proven point. Of course, evidence can be only inferential.

The cooling process is continuous, causing an adjustment, a reshaping, a shrinking, and the like. And this is the chief geological explanation of the earthquake and volcano. Undoubtedly this is the process in earthquake activities. The geological expert is quite right in his explanation so far as the *process* is concerned.

But again we come to that unseeing, subtle restraint and control which underlies and overlies all that science can ascertain. It can be none other than the hand of God. The Book plainly says so.

It says, with an almost monotonous repetition, that it is the hand of God. A thing is monotonous only when you haven't caught the

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key-note. The monotone to the sensitive recognizing ear becomes a tone of rarest rhythm.

That hand of God is on the atmosphere, keeping it in right gaseous adjustment. It is on our bodies, keeping the breath of life in them. It is on our planet-home, keeping it ever swinging in just the right adjustment to the sun.

It is on the water of the sea, keeping its proud waves from disturbing us. It is on the inside of our earth, restraining, controlling, for the sake of us men living on its surface.

The slightest withdrawal of that restraint on the inside of the earth would produce earthquake and volcanic activities. It is not that God does something. It is rather that He does less. He only answers man's tacit prayer to be left alone, answers partly, slightly, very slightly.

With the exquisite modulation of love's thoughtfulness there is the slightest withdrawal, and the unrestrained forces of nature are free to spill out and spew out, a little. For a great love purpose it is done.

God gives us a Book. We burn it up, or cut it up with scholarly fingers, or let it gather dust on orthodox shelves. He talks to us by

that inner voice. We shut our ears. He talks to us unceasingly in the stars and grass, the swelling bud and catkin, the snow crystals and the fragrant dew. We persistently stupidly ignore Him.

Something must be done. The little child may cut its jugular vein with that razor. The toddling baby may fall against the hot stove and be burned beyond cure.

With utmost pain when any man suffers pain, but to save a far worse incurable pain, God withdraws His hand, a trifle. The earth trembles. Men stop a moment, gasping. Will they not listen, and look, and think, and maybe use their knees?

The Process in Earthquakes.

There's a striking passage in the Book dealing with the *process* of earthquake activities. It is in Second Peter, chapter three. The setting is most significant. In the last days of the present order of things, preceding the transition to a new order, there will be a sneering mockery at the teaching of our Lord's personal return.

The plain inference is that these mockers

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are in the Church, or in touch with the Church constituencies. For they are familiar with the teaching of the Book regarding the second coming of Christ.

Then the Flood is referred to. Attention is directed to the fact that the *process* in the Flood was in the very make-up of things. By a simple touch of God, a touch of the withdrawal of restraint on the elements, that catastrophe occurred.

And a striking phrase is used, "they (these mockers) wilfully forget" certain things about the Flood. "Wilfully." What a volume in one word! Wilfully!

Then comes the reference in point. There is coming an upheaval to the earth. It is significant that it is coupled here with the Flood as being a race-wide event.

I am venturing to use a paraphrase. A paraphrase, you recall, is a translation of the thought rather than a mere transliteration of the words. And it takes much painstaking study to make it strictly true to both words and thought.

Here it is: the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same creative word of power, have been stored with fire. These reservoirs

of potential fire are being held in reserve for a day of settlement, the righting of the wrongs of earth. Then will occur the utter destruction of the present system of wickedness dominating the earth.¹

The heavens are reservoirs of fire it says. The slightest change in the gaseous atmosphere would envelope the earth in flames. Then, the immediate purpose being served, the creative touch would again interpose and normalize the atmosphere.

The earth, too, is a reservoir of fire. No words could be used to express more simply and adequately the inside of our globe.

But the purpose here should be most keenly marked. It tallies with the purpose in the Flood. That was not a purpose of judgment *chiefly*. Judgment was included, of course, but incidentally.

The purpose in the Flood was to give the race a new start on the earth when things had gotten to their moral zero-point. The purpose in the coming crisis-time is a clearing-up of the terrible moral rubbish. It is to righten the wrongs, to even up the frightful inequalities. It is to put a new inside into the race, a change

¹2 Peter 3:7, paraphrased.

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at the core. So the race will be swung off with a fresh start on the earth.

It is most significant that Jesus coupled the Flood, and the destruction of the Cities of the Plain, in talking about the coming crisis and His own return.

“As in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, *until the day* when Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of Man.”¹

“Likewise even as it came to pass in the days of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; . . . *after the same manner* shall it be in the day that the Son of Man is revealed” (*i. e.*, lets Himself be openly seen).²

The Man and the Throne.

And, then, one recalls who this is whose Hand is ever on things down here, steadying, controlling, restraining. It is the One who lived a common human span of life down on the earth, and died, and lived again, and still lives.

¹ Matthew 24: 38-39.

² Luke 17: 28-30.

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Down here men are squabbling. Pitifully, picayunishly, childishly, they are squabbling about that Man's earth birth, His death, His emptying or not of that new-hewn tomb. And the one thing they seem to agree upon is the discrediting of the Book, and the Man, who He was, and what He did.

And the untaught, undiscerning crowd surges feverishly around, listening with open eyes and mouths to the thinned-out religious verbiage from which the heart of truth has slid out long ago.

And some, who insist on the simple old facts, seem to forget the *spirit* of the Man they are seeking so strenuously to defend, and so they teeter to the other extreme.

And above, just out of reach of physical eyes, patiently sits the Man, watching, feeling it all keenly and restraining Himself strongly. He waits for the right ripe moment when in fairness to all concerned He will step into the direct action of earth once again.

One twilight I stepped out of a friend's home on Central Park in New York for a breath of fresh air. My eye was caught with the thin silvery crescent of the new moon, hanging out there on nothing, a mere thin

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curved line of bewitching beauty in the deepening blue.

And as I gazed and gazed I saw something else. It was just above that shining silvery crescent. It stood out quite clear. Oh! yes, I admit I had been reading in the old Book. That is true. I had been reading in that wondrous first leaf of rare old Ezeziel's vision.

But I really saw something above that crescented moon. I saw it with the eyes of my spirit. They see more distinctly, and farther, too, things that are really there, though not see-able by one's ordinary eyes.

It was this: there was a throne, almost within reach, just above the earth. There was some One on the throne—a Man. His face was plainly scarred. But it shone with an unspeakable inner glory-light transfiguring the scars into rare beauty.

He was bending down over the earth intently gazing. One hand was on an open Book, its finger down on the page as though keeping track of what was written there.

And I could plainly see that the other hand reached down, down, clear down to the earth. Its sensitive index-finger was on the pulse-beat of the life of the race.

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A sigh seemed to escape His lips as He noted the suffering down here. But an eagerness, a great sense of victory, a thrill of all-power seemed to radiate from His very presence.

And I seem to know that in His great, strong patient love He was restraining direct personal action, for man's sake, that opportunity might run to the full.

Yet His face showed plainly, and the inclination forward of His presence, that He was anticipating direct intervention. Yet I seemed to understand too, that in that time of direct intervention no man's individual initiative would be infringed upon, nor interfered with.

VIII

TWO OTHER OUTSTANDING TOPICS

Woman's Status—A Spirit Thermometer
Bodily Healing.

VIII

TWO OTHER OUTSTANDING TOPICS

WOMAN'S STATUS—A SPIRIT THERMOMETER

WOMAN is the index of civilization. Her status tells the story of any civilization.

A low standard of appreciation of woman means a low stage of civilization, and so on. This is true through the calendared ages, and around the planet.

Broadly, the religions of the race fall into two groups, the cultural and the Christian. By the cultural religions I mean those built up by man's ideas and practices.

The Christian religion is characteristically a divine revelation, given through a Book and a Man. It includes the rarest, broadest culture, but begins farther back, with something different.

It is very striking that woman's position characteristically under these two stands in sharpest contrast. Where Christ has full-

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sway, her place is highest. Where He has least sway or none, lowest.

A prolonged errand of service in non-Christian lands brought vividly to me the sharp contrast in the meanings of six words dear to woman's heart. These words are windows into two distinct civilizations. You look through the window and see woman's sharply contrasted position.

In the non-Christian meaning of the word a "woman" is a mere thing, to be bought and sold like any other chattel.

Sometimes she is a plaything, sometimes a mere vent for passionate lust, and all times at men's beck and nod and whim, as having no choice or soul of her own.

This, be it keenly marked, was the common meaning everywhere when Christ appeared. And it is still the common meaning where Christ's influence has not made a change.

In the Christian meaning woman is the complement of man in making up the human unit. She is distinct from man, and he from her.

Neither is complete without the other. Each grows more like the other in constant companionship, she stronger, he gentler. So each grows into the full human being.

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The second word is "wife." In the meaning of the cultural religions, uninfluenced by Christian touch, a wife is the husband's personal property. She is the particular bit of womankind that has become his by due bargaining and legal transfer. She is bargained for, bought and sold, hired out, sometimes for unmentionable purposes, or otherwise used, as he may choose.

In the typical Christian meaning a wife is the man's closest friend, his constant companion. She walks and lives at his side. In non-Christian civilizations she trails at his heels, as does his dog and his slave.

The third word is "mother." The old meaning—shall I give it? The common, profaned meaning among most of the race to-day?

Let the brevity of utterance make the naked ugliness of truth stand baldly out. A mother is the breeding machine of the human kind. The meaning is as lacking in every feeling of sacred tender humanness as that.

The Christian definition of mother? A fellow-creator with man and with God, in the most sacred and most potent task done by human hands.

The fourth word is "babe." The non-

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Christian meaning: an indispensable link in the family line. In the older civilizations the family is the unit. Everything centres in the family. So the babe is essential. But it is notorious that non-Christian civilization has not appreciated the child, and loved it for its own sake.

Notice the meaning where the Christ touch has come. A babe is a fresh act of God. His creative breath has been given direct at birth.

The babe is tenderly loved for its own sake, even when its lengthened out life is a question. Child culture is characteristically a thing of Christian civilization.

The fifth word is one fraught with more depth of meaning to more human hearts than any other, the word "love." The pre-Christ meaning, the non-Christian meaning to-day,—please read thoughtfully, for it is difficult to tell the story, yet it is true.

Love, yonder, is most commonly spelled with the initial "l" indeed, but then a "u" and an "s" and a "t."

The Christian meaning? Love is the purest and most purifying, the strongest and most tender, and most impelling emotion that can

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fill the human heart and shape and dominate human lives.

The sixth word is one peculiarly dear to our own English language. Its exact English equivalent is rarely found elsewhere. It is the word "home." In the cheapened meaning it's the place where a man keeps his personal goods and chattels, where his special woman-slave slaves, and breeds family perpetuation links.

The true Christian home? It is that sweet, sacred spot where love reigns and trains. There tenderest memories linger and cling, and send fragrance out into life. There a man goes to refresh himself, and knit up his strength anew for the battle in the world.

These are the meanings found to-day in those parts of the world where the two sorts of religion are found in the most characteristic stage.

Yet there is more to be said. It is impossible to build walls around any sort of civilization. To-day the whole earth is in touch as never before.

And happily some of the incidentals of Christianity are being copied and enjoyed in parts of the world distinctively non-Christian.

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Yet it is clearly as true that the winds are blowing the other way, too. Through every crevice, and where there seem to be no crevices, and through wide open doors and windows, the characteristic traits of a non-Christian civilization are coming into our Christian lands.

To-day some of the blessedly sacred meanings of these six words are being tainted and soiled. They are having a desperate fight for life against the subtle incoming sweep. This is particularly true of two—love, and home.

Those among us, to-day, who would take away Christianity's distinctly supernatural meaning may well stop and weigh the influence of merely cultural religion, as seen in this most sensitive thermometer.

BODILY HEALING

The race is sick, bodily sick. Oh, there is more health than disease, more strength than weakness, more life than death. Yet it is true that the world is sick.

There is a science of healing to-day. There are poor preachers and poor lawyers, and poor physicians. A vast amount of medical practice is confessedly experimental, and very

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costly in suffering and in life. And there is an increased tendency toward commercialization in all these noble callings.

Yet there is a real science of bodily relief and healing. Countless hosts have been benefited by its gracious ministrations and the world made a vastly better place. The debt to medical science can never be paid. Still, it remains true that the race is in bad shape physically.

Christ healed men's bodies when He was here. The twenty-four instances given, out of possibly some few thousands summarized, are nearly all of incurables. He healed, instantly, perfectly and permanently.

Does Christ heal men's bodies to-day? Let the abrupt brevity of the answer make the emphasis greater—yes. It is His first will that we should be pure in heart, true in life, poised in judgment, and strong and well in body. The teaching of the Book here is full and clear.

But—softly—the Church of Christ has not been true to the full Gospel of Christ, with exceptions. I say that with pain in my heart, as a lover and member of the Church.

And so false systems of healing have sprung

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up. There is one that holds the centre of the stage to-day. I do not need to name it, it is so well known. It uses Christ's Name freely, and quotes, or more accurately, misquotes the old Book of God.

And the striking thing to mark is that some are healed through its ministrations. Within certain sharp limitations healing does go on. But it should be carefully noted just how this is so.

There are five ways in which healing may come to one's body. There is a natural healing, without human coöperation. If you cut your finger, instantly there is a power within that begins to staunch the flow of blood and knit up the wound. The Creator has put a healing power in every man's body.

There is this natural healing, with human understanding and coöperation. The mental attitude has an incalculable influence in swinging nature's healing power into action. There is natural healing, assisted by expert human knowledge and skill. Here is the wise physician's place. "Man tends: God mends" is thoughtfully displayed over a large Eastern hospital.

Then, very thoughtfully, there is Satanic

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healing. "Ridiculous! Satan heal?" you say. "He is bad. And healing is good." Yes, a bad Satan will do a good thing for a bad purpose, to get and to tighten hold on the unsuspecting.

A mongrel cur in the back alley disturbs your night. You throw out a piece of good meat with some bad poison. The dog has no discernment between the good and the bad. He eats the good meat and gets the bad poison. The garbage cart has a job. And your sleep is unbroken now.

The false healing spoken of combines two of these ways, the natural healing with an instructed coöperation, and the Satanic. There can be no question of the Satanic healing in this connection. And most folks could claim unwilling kinship with that back-alley mongrel, so far as spirit discernment is concerned. We haven't been taught.

There is a fifth way in which healing comes, through our Lord Jesus; three natural ways, two supernatural.

But how shall we untaught folks know what teaching and what healing to accept? And the answer is quick and clear. It is never right or wise to accept any supernatural heal-

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ing except where the Deity and the blood of Christ are emphasized.

True supernatural healing is only through the God-Man who died. There is no red tinge in the false teaching named. And any supernatural healing, otherwise than through Christ's blood, brings a bondage of mind and of life that can be broken only through Christ, and often only through protracted spirit struggle.

There are conditions attached to healing by Christ. Of course, there are always conditions, whether it's banking, or cooking, or motoring, or what not. These are so simple here as to be almost laughable.

Trust Christ as a Saviour. Yield to Him as a Master. In a sane wholesome way make it your passion to please Him. Then when the need comes go to Him at once, direct. Ask for what you need. It is His first will to heal the body as to forgive the sins.

But what about the use of means? Ask Him. He'll tell you. You may be ignorantly abusing your body, or depriving it of something vitally necessary. You may need an expert to help you. Modern cookery and commercialism have robbed our foodstuffs of

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much nourishment put into them by a thoughtful Creator.

The thing to mark is this: Christ heals to-day, sometimes through means and skill, sometimes directly without either. Sometimes when the physician frankly confesses that it's beyond him.

And it should be keenly noted that there may be a waiting time. The Book of Job fits in here. The healing Christ is concerned for our spirit health as well as the bodily. Some of us need discipline. There is a distinctly disciplinary use in much bodily suffering.

Some bodily healing is delayed until we intelligently bring our stubborn wills into strong touch with His wise loving will. God has a hard time with some really saintly folks to get them to go His way.

But the outstanding thing to mark is that Christ hasn't changed. He heals to-day. It is His first will that we should be strong and healthy in spirit, and life and body.

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